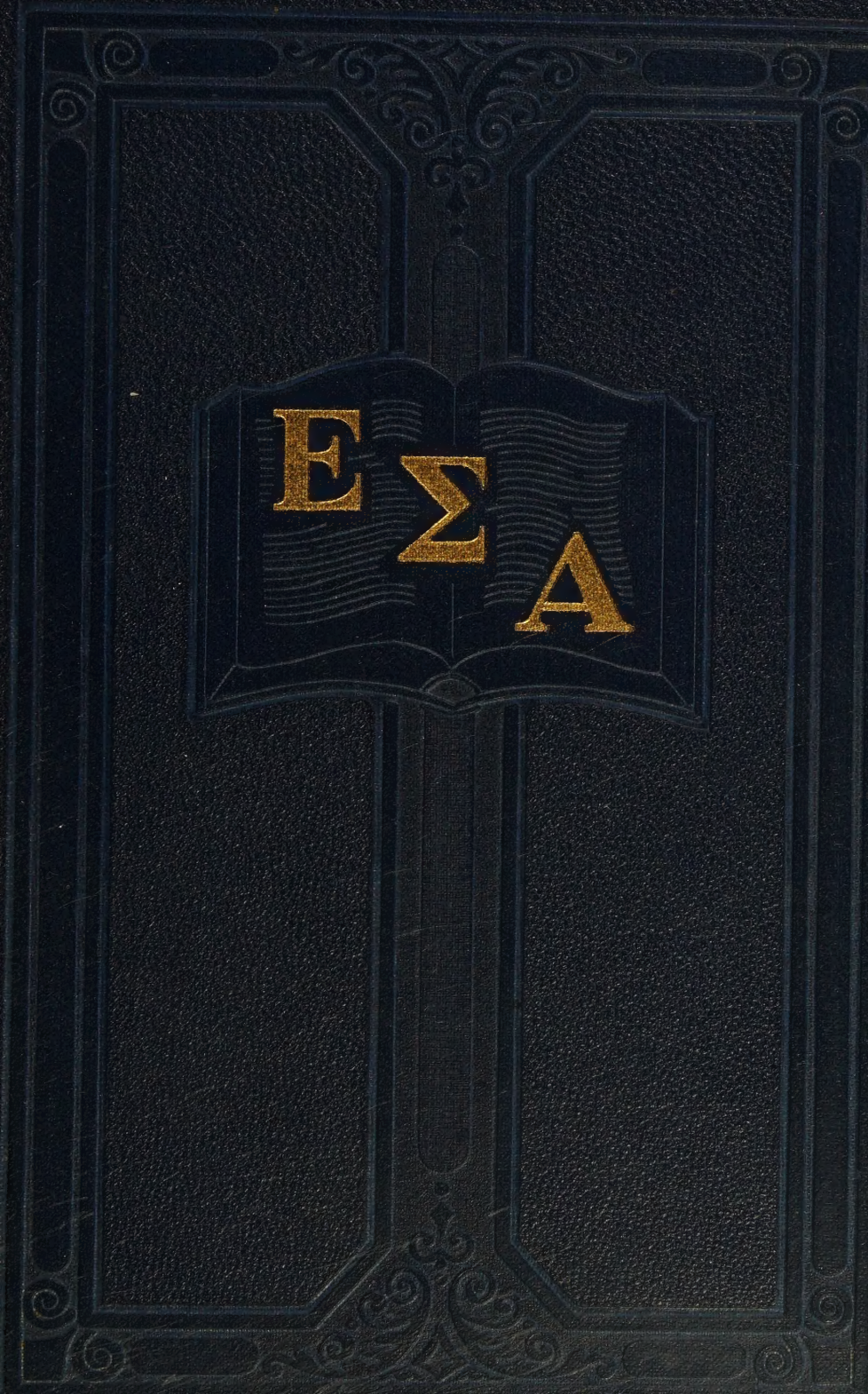
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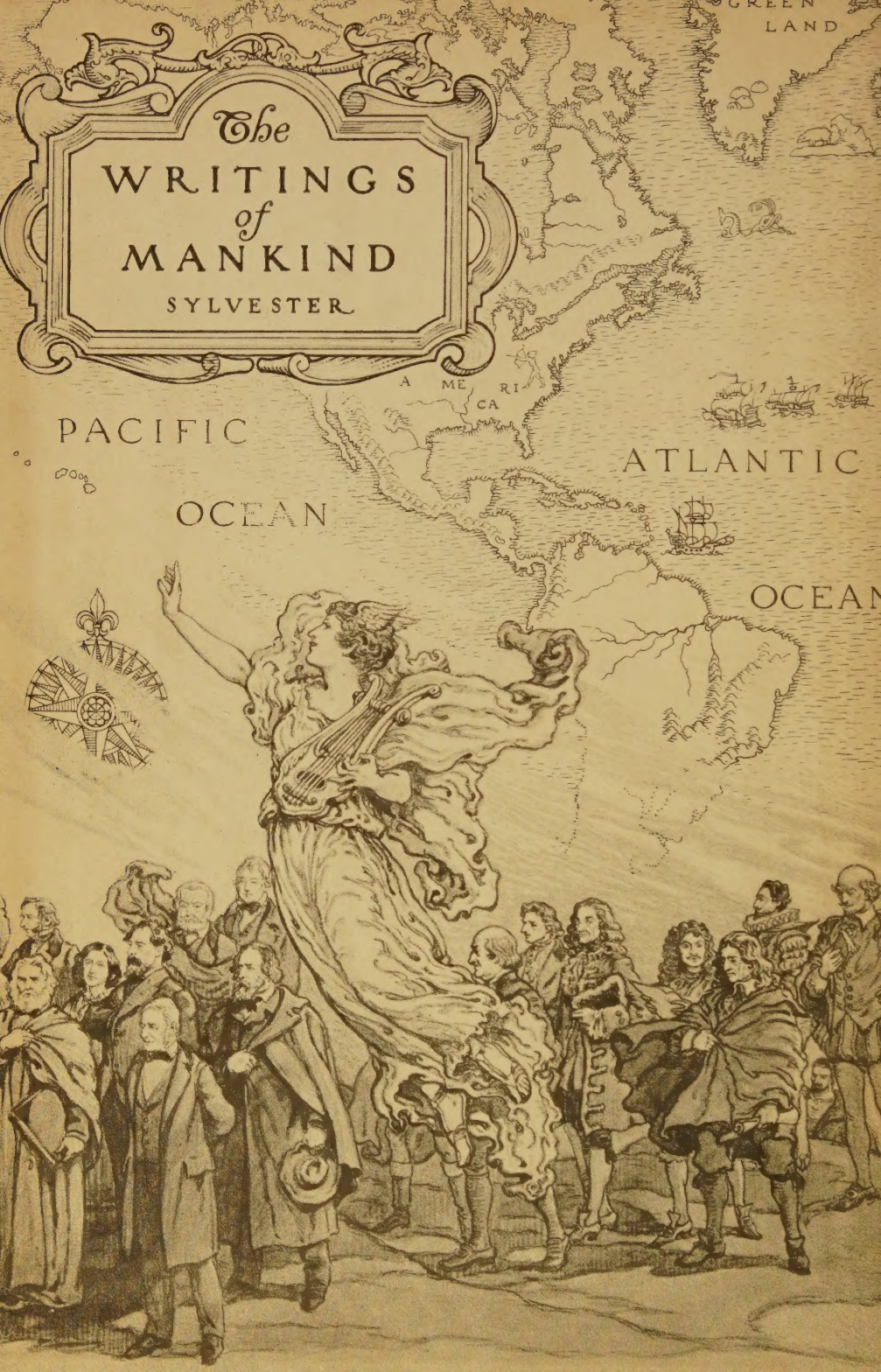
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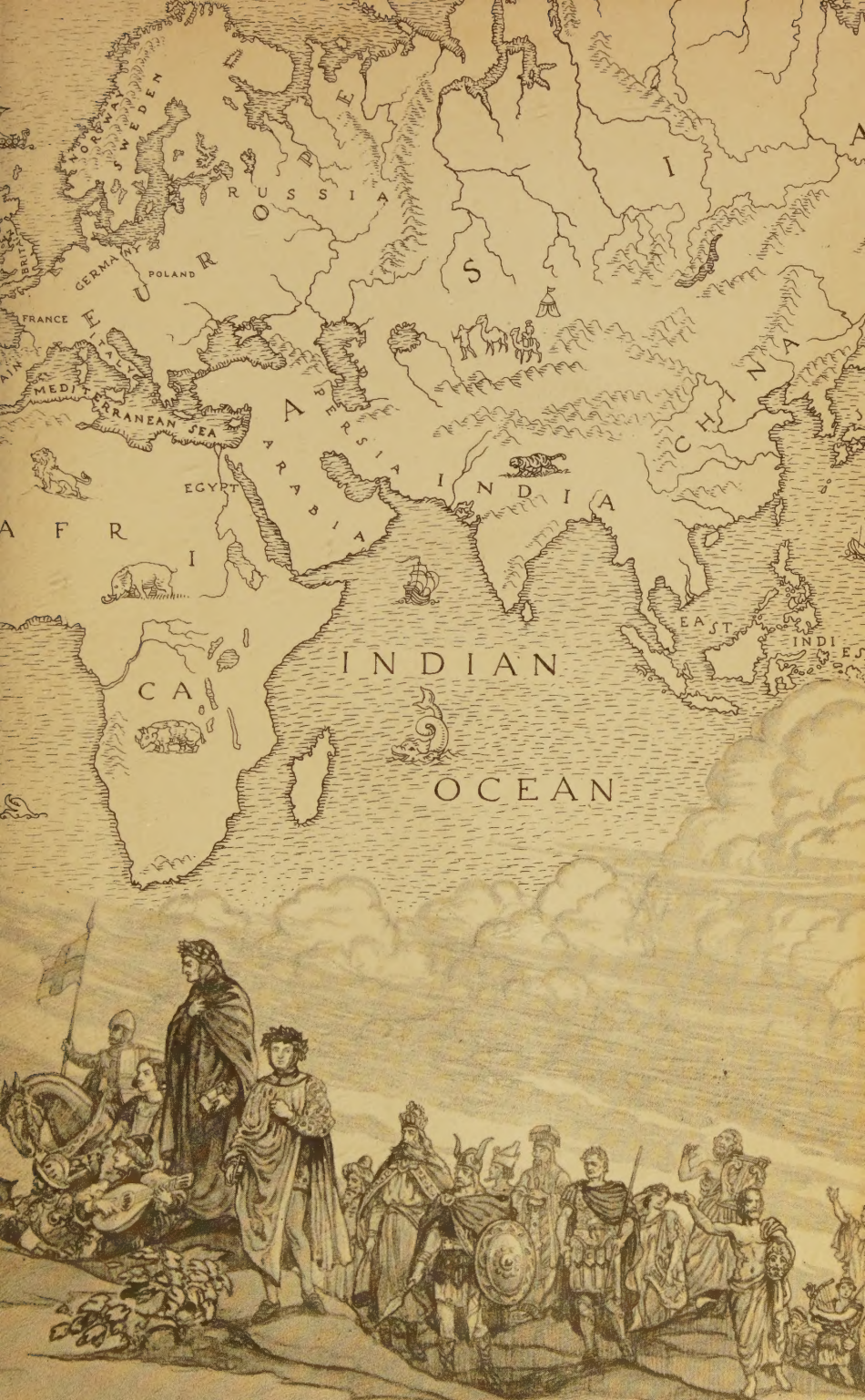
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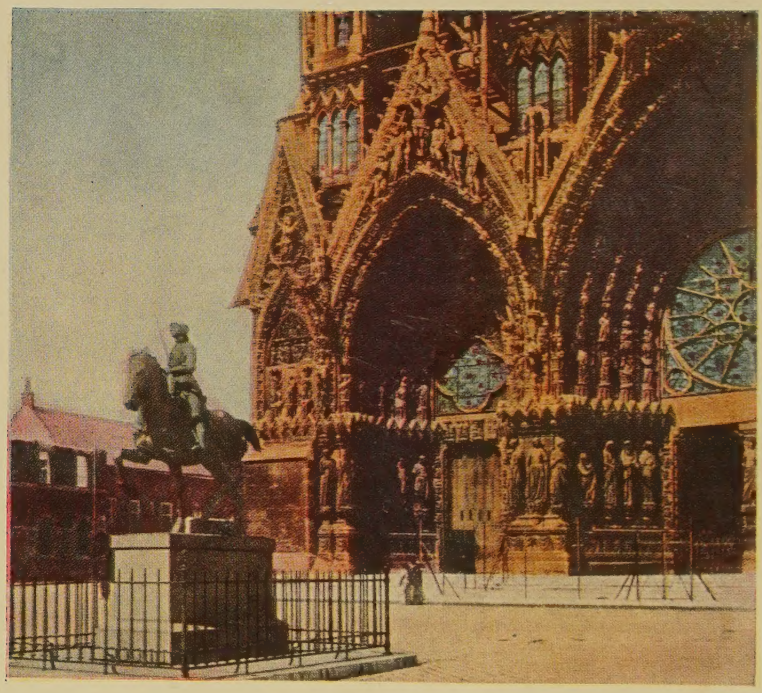

STATUE OF JOAN OF ARC
IN FRONT OF RHEIMS CATHEDRAL

THE WRITINGS OF MANKIND

Selections from the Writings of All Ages, with Extensive Historical Notes, Comment and Criticism, Giving the Customs, Habits, Characters; the Arts, Philosophies and Religions, of Those Nations That Have Contributed Most to Civilization

BY

CHARLES H. SYLVESTER

AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE"
"JOURNEYS THROUGH BOOKLAND", ETC.

TWENTY VOLUMES
Illustrated

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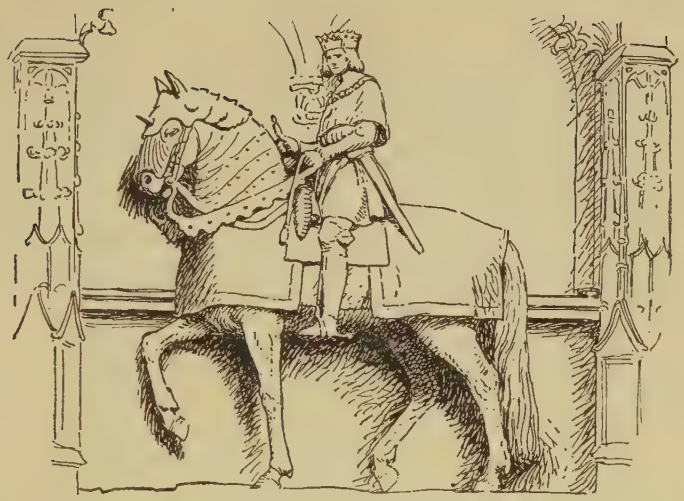


CHAPTER IX

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY (CONCLUDED)
POETRY

MAROT. Among the men of genius who gathered at the court of Margaret of Navarre was Clement Marot, born in 1496 at Cahors, the son of a poet. The young Clement won the favor of Francis I, accompanied him in his campaigns, was wounded at Pavia, and finally found an abiding patron in the King's sister. Educated for the law, he soon abandoned it for literature. His writings brought him under the suspicion of the Church; he was arrested and imprisoned, and after his release, arrested and imprisoned

a second and a third time; and it was only at the intercession of his royal patron that he escaped more serious punishment each time. As a refugee from persecution, he fled to Geneva, where he quarreled with Calvin, and made himself odious to the Protestants, as well. Death came to him while still a refugee at Turin in Italy.

Of a light and pleasure-loving disposition, Marot was attracted by the idea of revolt, and his temper made him a difficult person to deal with. Resenting criticism, bold in his actions, somewhat vain in manner and boastful in speech, licentious as were the members of his class, it seems strange that he should write verses that are above criticism. To quote from a modern writer, "In reading the best of them, one is persuaded for the moment that nothing is so enchanting as spontaneity, gayety, grace, quickness, keenness, unimpassioned sentiment and natural courtesy, and the philosophy that jests at personal misfortunes, flowing from a heart of tenderness."

None of the poems of Marot are of great length, and some of his masterpieces are epigrammatic, but whatever he wrote—elegies, epistles, satires, songs, ballads—are light and graceful, filled with the new life of the Renaissance, and convey to French literature the gift of felicity, delicacy and refinement in expression and the feeling that whatever is worth saying at all is worth saying in its best form.

II. Marot's Poetry. 1. Perhaps his epistles

are the most interesting of his productions, and he may be said to have originated the rhyming letter of badinage. The following, from a letter to the King, written after being robbed, is a good example:

I had of late a Gascon serving-man:
A monstrous liar, glutton, drunkard, both,
A trickster, thief, and every word an oath,—
The rope almost around his neck, you see,—
But otherwise the best of fellows he.

This very estimable youngster knew
Of certain money given me by you:
A mighty swelling in my purse he spied;
Rose earlier than usual, and hied
To take it deftly, giving no alarm,
And tucked it snugly underneath his arm,—
Money and all, of course,—and it is plain
'Twas not to give it back to me again,
For never have I seen it, to this day.

But still the rascal would not run away
For such a trifling bagatelle as that,
So also took cloak, trousers, cape, and hat,—
In short, of all my clothes the very best,—
And then himself so finely in them dressed
That to behold him, e'en by light of day,
It was his master surely, you would say.

He left my chamber finally, and flew
Straight to the stable, where were horses two;
Left me the worst, and mounted on the best,
His charger spurred, and bolted; for the rest,
You may be sure that nothing he omitted,
Save bidding me good-by, before he quitted.

So—ticklish round the throat, to say the truth,
But looking like St. George—this hopeful youth

Rode off, and left his master sleeping sound,
Who waking, not a blessed penny found.
This master was myself,—the very one,—
And quite dumbfounded to be thus undone;
To find myself without a decent suit,
And vexed enough to lose my horse, to boot.
But for the money you had given me,
The losing it ought no surprise to be;
For, as your gracious Highness understands,
Your money, Sire, is ever changing hands.

2. The following lines to Margaret, Queen of Navarre, are exquisite:

Mourn for the dead, let who will for them mourn;—
But while I live, my heart is most forlorn
For those whose night of sorrow sees no dawn
On this earth.

O Flower of France whom at the first I served,
Those thou hast freed from pain that them unnerved
Have given pain to thee, ah! undeserved,
I'll attest.

Of ingrates thou hast sadly made full test;
But since I left thee (bound by stern behest),—
Not leaving thee,—full humbly I've addrest
A princess

Who has a heart that does not sorrow less
Than thine. Ah, God! shall I ne'er know mistress,
Before I die, whose eye on sad distress
Is not bent?

Is not my Muse as fit and apt to invent
A song of peace that would bring full content
As chant the bitterness of this torment
Exceeding?

Ah! listen, Margaret, to the suffering
That in the heart of Renée plants its sting;
Then, sister-like, than hope more comforting,
Console her. . . .

3. The "laugh of Madame d'Albret" called forth the following clever lines:

She has indeed a throat of lovely whiteness,
The sweetest speech, and fairest cheeks and eyes;
But in good sooth her little laugh of lightness
Is where her chiefest charm, to my thought, lies.
With its gay note she can make pleasure rise,
Where'er she hap to be, withouten fail;
And should a bitter grief me e'er assail,
So that my life by death may threatened be,
To bring me back to health will then avail
To hear this laugh with which she slayeth me.

4. To a lady who wished "to see the poet," he wrote this stanza:

Before she saw me, reading in my book,
She loved me; then she wished to see my face:
Now she has seen me, gray, and swart of look,
Yet none the less remain I in her grace.
O gentle heart, maiden of worthy race,
You do not err: for this my body frail,
It is not I; naught is it but my jail:
And in the writings that you once did read,
Your lovely eyes—so may the truth avail—
Saw me more truly than just now, indeed.

5. The following is an epigram on Love:

No longer am I what I have been,
Nor again can ever be;
My bright Springtime and my Summer
Through the window flew from me.

Love, thou hast ever been my master,
I've served no other God so well;—
Oh, were I born a second time, Love,
Then my service none could tell.

6. *Old-time Love* is one of his best lyrics:

In good old days such sort of love held sway
As artlessly and simply made its way,
And a few flowers, the gift of love sincere,
Than all the round earth's riches were more dear:

For to the heart alone did they address their lay.
And if they chanced to love each other, pray
Take heed how well they then knew how to stay
For ages faithful—twenty, thirty year—
In good old days.

But now is lost Love's rule they used t' obey;
Only false tears and changes fill the day.
Who would have me a lover now appear
Must love make over in the olden way,
And let it rule as once it held its sway
In good old days.

The imitators of Marot accomplished little of permanent value, but they confirmed in the French mind the notion that elegance is an essential of poetry and thus paved the way for the greater artists to follow.

III. The Pleiade. The poetry of the sixteenth century was by no means confined to Marot, and among the most striking results of the Renaissance were the enthusiasm created among lovers of poetry for the new ideas, for truth and elegance in style and a turning toward nature for inspiration. In the early part of the sixteenth century a group of scholarly

French poets, seven in number, called themselves the Pleiade, as did the seven Greek poets three centuries before Christ, at Alexandria. The leading spirit in this group was Jean Daurat, but the best poet, the one of widest influence, was Ronsard, of whom we shall speak at greater length.

Having made their first declaration of principles in 1549, they set forward earnestly to carry them out, and their writings show the humanism of the Renaissance to its fullest extent. Their chief assertion and the prime motive of their arguments was that the French language should be as complete a medium for poetical expression as that of the ancients; and as they shared fully the admiration for the scholars of the past, they devoted their efforts to create in their language a poetical instrument that in all respects was adequate for the most complete demands of genius. To quote their own words:

> Languages are not like plants, strong or weak by chance: they depend upon human volition. Consequently, if our language be more feeble than the Greek or the Latin, it is the fault of our ancestors, who neglected to strengthen and adorn it. Translations alone will never enrich a language. We need to follow the example of the Romans, who imitated rather than translated the best Greek authors, transforming them into their own likeness, devouring their substance, and after digesting it thoroughly, converting it into nourishment and blood.

While they were enthusiasts, they still were scholarly, and they set about in a systematic

manner to create what they proposed. Perhaps the natural result was that ultimately they placed too high a value upon form and structure and thereby inspired in their imitators and followers an artificiality which kept their work far below the level of the leaders. In fact, that part of the poetry of the sixteenth century which has in it the greatest beauty and value is found in the lyrics and shorter poems, where Ronsard and his followers forgot their art in the natural outpourings of their genius.

IV. Ronsard. While it seems unwise to enter into any further discussion of the Pleiade and their poetry, yet we cannot pass them wholly by without a brief consideration of their best poet, Pierre de Ronsard (1524–1585). At the age of nine little Pierre was taken by his noble father to the College of Navarre, where, however, the master was so extremely harsh that the bright boy lost his health and his interest in his studies, so that at the end of six months he was very willing to be taken away and to enter as a page in the service of the Duke of Orleans. From then until his seventeenth year his career was an astonishing one, for he became the prime favorite of the King and was sent by him on secret missions, during which he suffered many hardships and finally became ill and totally lost his hearing. This affliction stood so much in the way of his advancement as a courtier that the brilliant lad, who, however, was more a man in experience and knowledge of the world, retired

from public life and for seven years with certain friends of his studied arduously in the College of Coqueret. This association was the germ of the Pleiade.

In 1550 Ronsard published his first poems, which brought him honors and pensions from the court and a host of distinguished friends. His religious sympathies were with the Catholics, and he rose to high favor under Charles IX as the royal, or court, poet. Far beyond the confines of his own country extended his reputation: Queen Elizabeth presented him with a costly diamond; Marie Stuart from her English prison sent a buffet, upon which stood a silver Pegasus, inscribed, "To Ronsard, the Apollo of the Fountain of the Muses;" Tasso sought his advice and read to him the opening cantos of his epic. In his own country, Charles IX on one occasion invited him to sit beside him on the throne; Montaigne gave him the highest rank; in the schools his works were publicly read and expounded; and it is said that on the scaffold the poet Chastelard would have no other consolation than Ronsard's *Hymn to Death.*

The death of Ronsard was considered a national calamity, and the greatest of honors were paid his memory, but his rise to such extraordinary acclaim was equaled by the rapidity with which he was forgotten. Malherbe, severest of Ronsard's critics, had his day and Ronsard's popularity fled, but in the hands of the romantic poets of the early part

of the nineteenth century it was again established in France, and to-day he is recognized as he was during the latter years of his life, the "Prince of Poets."

Ronsard's service to the French language was enormous and much in the same line with that of Rabelais in prose, although without the humorous extravagance of the latter. Versification, too, was as much indebted to Ronsard as speech, for not only did he introduce the ode into French poetry, but he wrote the finest lyric poetry that appeared in the language until three hundred years later Victor Hugo rivaled him in melody, simplicity and grace.

V. A Few of Ronsard's Lyrics. 1. The following is a translation by Andrew Lang of *His Lady's Tomb:*

As in the gardens, all through May, the rose,
Lovely and young and rich apparelèd,
Makes sunrise jealous of her rosy red,
When dawn upon the dew of dawning glows;
Graces and Loves within her breast repose,
The woods are faint with the sweet odor shed,
Till rains and heavy suns have smitten dead
The languid flower, and the loose leaves unclose:

So this, the perfect beauty of our days,
When heaven and earth were vocal of her praise,
The fates have slain, and her sweet soul reposes:
And tears I bring, and sighs, and on her tomb
Pour milk, and scatter buds of many a bloom,
That, dead as living, Rose may be with roses.

2. From the same source as the preceding comes this translation of *Roses:*

I send you here a wreath of blossoms blown,
And woven flowers at sunset gatherèd.
Another dawn had seen them ruined, and shed
Loose leaves upon the grass at random strown.
By this, their sure example, be it known
That all your beauties, now in perfect flower,
Shall fade as these, and wither in an hour,
Flower-like, and brief of days, as the flower sown.

Ah, time is flying, lady—time is flying;
Nay, 'tis not time that flies but we that go,
Who in short space shall be in churchyard lying,
And of our loving parley none shall know,
Nor any man consider what we were:
Be therefore kind, my love, whiles thou art fair.

3. *Ronsard to His Mistress* is thus paraphrased by Thackeray:

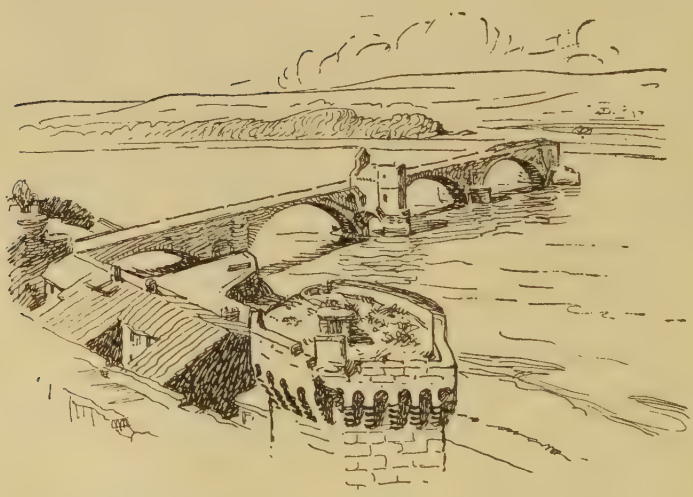
Some winter night, shut snugly in
Beside the fagot in the hall,
I think I see you sit and spin,
Surrounded by your maidens all.
Old tales are told, old songs are sung,
Old days come back to memory:
You say, "When I was fair and young,
A poet sang of me!"

There's not a maiden in your hall,
Though tired and sleepy ever so,
But wakes as you my name recall,
And longs the history to know.
And as the piteous tale is said
Of lady cold and lover true,
Each, musing, carries it to bed,
And sighs and envies you!

"Our lady's old and feeble now,"
They'll say; "she once was fresh and fair,

And yet she spurned her lover's vow,
  And heartless left him to despair:
The lover lies in silent earth,
  No kindly mate the lady cheers;
She sits beside a lonely hearth,
    With threescore and ten years!"

Ah! dreary thoughts and dreams are those,—
  But wherefore yield me to despair,
While yet the poet's bosom glows,
  While yet the dame is peerless fair!
Sweet lady mine! while yet 'tis time,
  Requite my passion and my truth;
And gather in their blushing prime
    The roses of your youth!



ANCIENT BRIDGE AT AVIGNON

CHAPTER X

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION, 1592–1643

PROSE

CHARACTERISTICS. From the death of Montaigne in 1592 to the accession of Louis XIV, a period of about seventy years, literature made little, if any, advancement in France, though it was cultivated extensively, and tendencies developed which later led to the marvelous growth in elegance and excellence that was typical of the Golden Age of Louis, the *Grand Monarque*. But along with these indications of advancement were more than traces of retrogression, and superiority in many lines gave way to mediocrity. Never-

theless, one must never look at these transitional epochs as of little importance; rather do they correspond to the periods between seed time and fruition, when the germs of better things lie dormant in darkness but are gaining strength for the rapid growth that is to follow.

It was necessary that the redundant life of the Renaissance should be checked, or literature would have grown rank and coarse with the very superabundance of vitality. In France the movement was halted by those internal convulsions which, after the death of Francis, threatened the stability of the throne and for a period of nearly sixty years caused the country to run red with the blood of religious wars and lie helpless in the horrors of civil strife. Not till the powerful Richelieu gained control did anarchy cease, and by that time the freshness and glory of the Renaissance had faded into darkness. Yet, what Richelieu accomplished for France in the way of political evolution was accomplished for literature by a number of people of little more than mediocrity rather than by one great leader.

From the conflict of creeds arose definiteness of thought and precision of expression. Previous to the time of Calvin polite literature may have been written in French, but thinking was done in Latin. The reformers changed all this and learned in French to think logically and express themselves in severe purity of style. Such, in brief, were the characteristics

of this epoch, but there are a few developments which must be considered in greater detail.

II. The Salons. Catherine de Vivonne was the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the Marquis of Pisini, and at her marriage to the future Marquis of Rambouillet in 1600 she was given as part of her dowry the Hotel Pisini in Paris. Not satisfied with its condition, she had it wholly remodeled, and a few years later, becoming displeased with the crowded society of the Louvre, decided to retire to her beautiful home and there surround herself with friends and acquaintances of congenial tastes. The Italian blood in the veins of the hostess showed itself in her refinement and abounding enthusiasm, in spite of an affliction that kept her an invalid for the greater part of the year. No such infirmity was allowed to stand in her way, and from her bed in an elegantly-furnished alcove in the salon of the Hotel de Rambouillet, as her palace was now called, she presided over those levees to which for a generation came the greatest and brightest men and women of France. Later, the daughter of Catherine divided with her the honor of the assembly, which retained its importance until the failing powers of the mother and the marriage of the daughter put an end to its activities.

In its prime the salon was the center of literary activity for the kingdom, and ideas were exchanged upon every conceivable topic. The effect of these discussions was to refine

manners, to quicken intellects and to create a precise and elegant literary language in contradistinction to ordinary speech. In its later years the salon grew petty in its taste, and *precieux* gained the significance of *affectation,* especially where applied to those who made literature finical. The dainty trifles, the ridiculous affectations of refinement, cause a smile as they are recounted, but they should not obscure the really brilliant accomplishments of the salon in its early day.

Among the noted personages who visited that first salon were Mademoiselle Scudery and her brother Georges, the former then in the height of her extraordinary and unmerited popularity as a novelist and the latter a dramatist, the rival and severe critic of Corneille; the one owing her fame as a writer of stories to the absurd taste of the school of preciosity, the other owing his to the patronage of Richelieu. There, too, came Madame de Sevigne, celebrated for her charming letters, whom we shall know better; Mademoiselle de la Vergne, afterwards Madame de Lafayette, equally eminent as a blue stocking; the Duchess de Longueville and other women highly influential in political circles, and she who afterwards as Madame de Maintenon and the mistress of Louis XIV became the most powerful personage in France. From this salon may be said to date the active participation on a large scale of women in affairs of state—a participation which continually increased.

The later degeneracy of the salon was pitiful, for its frippery and preciseness reached such a point that only the initiated could understand its language and only the fashionable *dilletante* endure its manners. Elsewhere in the city and in the provinces women in imitation of Madame de Rambouillet held their salons, and from the alcoves of their reception rooms, lolling on satin pillows fringed with lace, listened to the petty gossip of their admirers or to sycophantic followers who gathered in the space about the bed.

On the other hand, there were many wise and noted women who held salons of a higher class, where topics of national interest were discussed and where learned conversations on literature, art, politics and religion popularized learning and cast their influence far beyond the rooms of the leader. Such salons continued to be popular down to the Revolution.

III. The Academy. One of the glories of Richelieu was the establishment by him of the French Academy, an official body of literary experts, which showed the great Cardinal's appreciation of the fact that the literature of a country is a matter of public and official concern. The purpose of the Academy was to correct and fix the language, to encourage and maintain a correct and elevated taste, and to create an authoritative body whose influence might extend to all parts of the nation.

In 1629 Valentin Conrart entertained weekly a body of men of letters who discussed new

works and such questions of grammar, language and criticism as might be introduced. Richelieu, hearing of these meetings, desired to give the body some official recognition and, although some of the members preferred the freedom and comparative irresponsibility of their clubs, the newly-organized *Academie Française* met for the first time in March, 1634.

The number of members was fixed at forty, and new members, who could enter only upon the creation of a vacancy, were elected for life. It was hoped that the members would gladly submit their works to the Academy and that authoritative works of standard quality on grammar, rhetoric and literature would be issued under the direct sanction of the Academy, but in this respect the organization has been a disappointment. However, the first edition of a dictionary was produced after long preparation, in 1694, a work that established in a measure the propriety of words for all France, as it was intended to contain only those words which had an established good usage by the best of writers. The effect of this was to restrict somewhat a growing vocabulary, but it fixed the rank of words once and for all.

It may be said, then, that the French Academy took up the work of the salons and carried it out in a more intellectual and less sentimental manner. One effect of the existence of such a body has been to dignify literature as a calling and to fix its canons more rigidly by

far than in England; in fact, it may have preserved too high a standard of literary taste, or rather, in its conservatism it may have hindered the development of original genius. Some of the greatest of French writers, such, for instance, as Moliere, Diderot and Flaubert, remained outside the Academy, and many of the best and most helpful accomplishments and fruitful decisions in the organization have come only after the most bitter opposition of many of its members. The anxiety of the French writer to attain membership in the Academy naturally tends to make him take literature seriously and to conform to the rules which the Academy prescribes—or at least to the customs which they tolerate.

IV. Port Royal. The Cistercian Abbey of Port Royal des Champs was founded early in the thirteenth century about eighteen miles from Paris, and is remembered now principally for the glory of its closing years. Just before the time of which we are now writing, its young abbess, known in religion as La Mere Angelique, had completed a rigorous reformation and a reëstablishment of the rules which had been greatly relaxed in the community. The director of the community, the Abbe of St. Cyran, was a close friend of Cornelius Jansen, bishop of Ypres. Together they had made a deep study of the works of St. Augustine and had derived from them certain religious principles, the application of which caused bitter religious troubles for a long

period of time. The chief opponents of the Jansenists were the Jesuits, and the war between them was exceedingly bitter and prolonged.

The reputation of the director, St. Cyran, and his two successors was such that men and women came from all parts of the country to study and learn from these great teachers. Few of the visitors took monastic vows, but all lived for a time in this spiritual center a monastic or even a hermit life. The women roomed in the convent, while the men built rooms near by or lived on a farm belonging to the abbey. A common worship, a devotion to the same teachers and similar vows on religion bound these people together, but the sexes were rigidly separated.

While the influence of these studious men and women was considerable outside of Port Royal, our chief interest in that institution lies in the fact that for some time it was the home of Blaise Pascal and was responsible to a large degree for his thought.

V. Pascal. The extraordinary man whose name heads this section was born in Auvergne in June, 1623, of a well-known and influential legal family. His father was provincial administrator in Normandy, where the young Blaise lived from the age of sixteen to that of twenty-five. The mother died when Blaise was eight years old, and on account of the boy's extremely delicate health, his education was conducted almost entirely by his father, a

sternly pious man, who was not above the superstitions of the age and believed that his son's weakness was caused by witchcraft. Pascal employed an old woman to remove the evil eye, but her spells and incantations produced no effect on the disease, although they were never forgotten by the child who was their subject. The precosity of Blaise was extraordinary, but his genius showed itself principally in mathematics, and at no time was his reading wide or his general scholarship profound. However, when at eight years of age his father took him to Paris for his education, the boy was already a wonder. At sixteen he wrote a remarkable treatise on conic sections, thought worthy to be read before the scientific men of Paris; at nineteen he invented a calculating machine, and was in a fair way to eclipse every one in this science, when his intense studies undermined his health, and after an illness which followed he never regained a strength that permitted him to continue his arduous labors.

Chateaubriand thus sums up the qualities and achievements of the youthful Pascal:

> There was a man who at the age of twelve, with straight lines and circles, had created mathematics; who at sixteen had composed the most learned treatise on conic sections produced since ancient times; who at nineteen reduced to machinery the processes of a science that resides wholly in the mind; who at twenty-three demonstrated the weight of the atmosphere and destroyed one of the greatest errors of the older physicists; who at an age when other men are just beginning to awake to life,

having traversed the whole round of human knowledge, perceived its emptiness, and turned all his thoughts toward religion; who from that moment till his death at the age of thirty-nine, constantly beset by infirmity and disease, fixed the tongue that Bossuet and Racine spoke, gave the model at once of the most perfect pleasantry and of the closest logic, and finally, in the short respite that his bodily pains allowed him, solved unaided one of the deepest problems of geometry, and set down in random order thoughts that seem as much divine as human.

In 1646 the elder Pascal met with an accident, and during his convalescence fell under the influence of two Jansenists, who attended him during his illness and who awakened the family to an interest in religion. The daughter, Jaqueline, wished to enter the convent, but the father seriously objected. Blaise himself was converted, and for a time followed the religious life, but the pleasures of Paris attracted him and he returned to the city, where for a few years he lived as did other young men of equal position. In the autumn of 1654 some serious accident drew his thoughts away from the earth and he underwent a second sudden conversion, which wrought a complete and permanent change in his life. From that moment he was under absolute obedience to his spiritual director, lived a life of austerity and self-denial and gave most of his possessions away in charity. He visited Port Royal, and before the end of the year became one of the solitaries there, entering into the life with enthusiasm and becoming the society's champion in controversies.

It was at the time, too, when the Port Royalists needed aid, for they were under suspicion of the government and had been punished in the condemnation of Jansen. At this time Antoine Arnauld, the brother of La Mere Angelique and himself in danger of condemnation by the Sorbonne, wrote a statement of the case for the information of the people, and a defense of the institution. When he read his article to the solitaries at Port Royal he discovered its weakness and handed it to Pascal with the remark that a younger man with a lighter pen could perform the task to better advantage. The next day Pascal produced *A Letter Written to a Provincial by One of his Friends,* the first of the famous *Provincial Letters,* of which we shall have occasion to make further mention.

M. Arnauld was condemned and, his enemies said, excommunicated. At any rate, he was in hiding and in danger of death. The professors were about to be dismissed from the school, the students were scattering, and the solitaries had nearly all departed, when the reports of an astounding miracle changed the whole course of events and reëstablished Port Royal in popular favor. Margaret, a niece of Pascal, only ten years old, was one of the pupils at the subsidiary school of Port Royal, in Paris. She was suffering from a very dangerous and disgusting ulcer of the lachrymal gland, which had already destroyed some of the bones of her face and left her a hideous object. During

the service in honor of one of the thorns from the crown of the Savior's mockery, at the time when the relic was passed from hand to hand, one of the nuns suggested to the little Margaret that as she held the thorn she should pray for her eye and touch the ulcer with the reliquary. The child was cured immediately. This miracle became to Pascal a solemn matter of religion, and from then on he used an eye encircled with a crown of thorns and bearing the motto *Scio cui credidi* as his coat of arms. To him it was God's justification of the belief and works of Port Royal, and he immediately set about the composition of a great work in defense of his religion and against atheists and non-believers. But his health was weak, and all that he was able to accomplish was to jot his thoughts down from time to time whenever he happened to think of them and on whatever scrap of paper lay at hand, with the idea of arranging and classifying them at greater leisure. In fact, some of the paragraphs of his great work were fully written and finely polished, when, at the early age of thirty-nine, he passed away in an ecstasy of belief.

VI. The Work of Pascal. Without reference to the subject-matter of the *Provincial Letters,* they are one of the most extraordinary productions in all literature, for they were at once recognized as the most perfect prose that had been produced in France. Other writers had furnished a vocabulary and written in loose or enthusiastic style, but here was struck

the first thoroughly characteristic French note, which was to endure for all time. The sentences of Pascal were clear, straightforward and distinct, and they were arranged in a proper succession of clearly-related paragraphs, each of which was developed in logical order of thought. In fact, here stood French prose based upon reason, with the last medieval ambiguities discarded; French prose unique in literature, in vigor, elegance and precision. The *Provincial Letters* are a work of controversy and remote from our interest today, yet every passage is fascinating, and the vivacity and raillery are as brilliant as when written. On such a note the letters begin, but as the writer proceeds he discards wit and laughter and goes on with increasing seriousness until finally he bursts forth in terrific denunciation and darkest objurgation. The effect of these letters was to take the discussion of morals and theology away from the Sorbonne and place it with the public, to be decided by the intelligence and conscience of mankind in general.

Pascal's *Pensees de la Religion* (*Thoughts*), under which name are published the fragments of the great work he contemplated, surpassed in brilliance and force many of the similar passages in the *Provincial Letters*. They show, too, the intimate personal self of Pascal and deal, not like the *Provincial Letters,* with questions long since antiquated, but with problems that are ever present and always interesting.

Pascal sought passionately the truth, but he realized in his weakness that he was incapable of reaching perfect truth: yet this very consciousness in man of his weakness is a proof of his greatness: "Man is a reed, the feeblest of created things, but a reed which thinks." The only explanation Pascal can find for this condition is that man is fallen from a higher estate, that he is in reality a dethroned king. There is, however, a way by which this incompleteness may be made complete, this loss be restored, and that is through Christ, the God-made man. To say that this is the vital thought in Pascal's philosophy is, perhaps, putting it fairly; but he always paints with glaring colors the miserable weakness of human knowledge, reason, ambition and the transcendent greatness and glory of God.

While Pascal's language is thoroughly modern, yet his thought is almost as deeply medieval in its nature. He was a distinguished man of science, but he hesitated to consider the theory of Copernicus, considering it more important to think of his immortal soul. The last years of his life he spent like those of a medieval monk, wrapped in superstition and asceticism, so that we find in him the most tragic contradictions imaginable. While he turned from his pride of intellect and sought consolation in religion, yet there was always something terrifying in the outlook, some impenetrable horror still seizing him: "The eternal silence of infinite space terrifies me."

VII. PASCAL'S PROFESSION OF FAITH. A few days after Pascal's death a servant found sewed into his master's waistcoat the following profession of faith, written on parchment, with a copy on paper. His family believed that it was his custom to place this in each new garment in order that he might have always about him a memorial of the great spiritual crisis through which he had passed:

This year of Grace 1654,
Monday, November 23rd, day of Saint Clement, pope and martyr, and others in the martyrology,
Eve of Saint Chrysogonus, martyr, and others;
From about half past ten at night, to about half after midnight,
Fire.
God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
Not of the philosophers and the wise.
Security, security. Feeling, joy, peace.
God of Jesus Christ

Deum meum et Deum vestrum.

Thy God shall be my God.
Forgetfulness of the world and of all save God.
He can be found only in the ways taught in the Gospel.
Greatness of the human soul.
O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee.
Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.
I have separated myself from him.

Dereliquerunt me fontem aquae vivae.

My God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . .
That I be not separated from thee eternally.
This is life eternal: That they might know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent,

Jesus Christ,
Jesus Christ,
Jesus Christ.
I have separated myself from him; I have fled, renounced, crucified him.
May I never be separated from him.
He maintains himself in me only in the ways taught in the Gospel.
Renunciation total and sweet.
etc.

VIII. Extracts from the "Thoughts."

The following extracts from the *Thoughts* are taken more or less at random; they are for the most part from the translation of C. Kegan Paul:

Then, returning to himself, let man consider his own being compared with all that is; let him regard himself as wandering in this remote province of nature; and from the little dungeon in which he finds himself lodged —I mean the universe—let him learn to set a true value on the earth, on its kingdoms, its cities, and on himself.

What is a man in the infinite? But to show him another prodigy no less astonishing, let him examine the most delicate things he knows. Let him take a mite, which in its minute body presents him with parts incomparably more minute; limbs with their joints, veins in the limbs, blood in the veins, humors in the blood, drops in the humors, vapors in the drops; let him, again dividing these last, exhaust his power of thought; let the last point at which he arrives be that of which we speak, and he will perhaps think that here is the extremest diminutive in nature. Then I will open before him therein a new abyss. I will paint for him not only the visible universe, but all that he can conceive of nature's immensity in the inclosure of this diminished atom. Let him therein see an infinity of universes, of which each has its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same pro-

portion as in the visible world; in each earth animals, and at the last the mites, in which he will come upon all that was in the first, and still find in these others the same without end and without cessation; let him lose himself in wonders as astonishing in their minuteness as the others in their immensity; for who will not be amazed at seeing that our body, which before was imperceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is now a colossus, a world, a whole, in regard to the nothingness to which we cannot attain.

Whoso takes this survey of himself will be terrified at the thought that he is upheld in the material being given him by nature, between these two abysses of the infinite and nothing,—he will tremble at the sight of these marvels; and I think that as his curiosity changes into wonder, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence than to search into them with presumption.

For after all, what is man in nature? A nothing in regard to the infinite, a whole in regard to nothing, a mean between nothing and the whole; infinitely removed from understanding either extreme. The end of things and their beginnings are invincibly hidden from him in impenetrable secrecy; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothing whence he was taken, and the infinite in which he is engulfed.

What shall he do then, but discern somewhat of the middle of things, in an eternal despair of knowing either their beginning or their end? All things arise from nothing, and tend towards the infinite. Who can follow their marvelous course? The author of these wonders can understand them, and none but he.

. . . . . .

We think we are playing on ordinary organs when we play upon man. Men are organs indeed, but fantastic, changeable, and various, with pipes not arranged in due succession. Those who understand only how to play upon ordinary organs make no harmonies on these.

. . . . . .

The weather and my moods have little in common. I have my foggy and my fine days within me; whether my affairs go well or ill has little to do with the matter. I sometimes strive against my luck; the glory of subduing it makes me subdue it gayly, whereas I am sometimes wearied in the midst of my good luck.

. . . . . .

The spirit of this sovereign judge of the world—man—is not so independent but that it is liable to be troubled by the first disturbance about him. The noise of a cannon is not needed to break his train of thought, it need only be the creaking of a weathercock or a pulley. Do not be astonished if at this moment he argues incoherently: a fly is buzzing about his ears, and that is enough to render him incapable of sound judgment. Would you have him arrive at truth, drive away that creature which holds his reason in check, and troubles that powerful intellect which gives laws to towns and kingdoms. Here is a droll kind of god!

. . . . . .

When we are too young our judgment is at fault; so also when we are too old.

If we take not thought enough, or too much, on any matter, we are obstinate and infatuated.

He that considers his work so soon as it leaves his hands, is prejudiced in its favor; he that delays his survey too long, cannot regain the spirit of it.

So with pictures seen from too near or too far: there is but once precise point from which to look at them; all others are too near or too far, too high or too low. Perspective determines that precise point in the art of painting. But who shall determine it in truth or morals?

. . . . . .

Weariness.—Nothing is so insupportable to man as to be completely at rest, without passion, without business, without diversion, without study. He then feels his nothingness, his loneliness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness.

At once, from the depth of his soul, will arise weariness, gloom, sadness, vexation, disappointment, despair.

. . . . . .

Nothing more astonishes me than to see that men are not astonished at their own weakness. They act seriously, and every one follows his own mode of life, not because it is as a fact good to follow, being the custom, but as if each man knew certainly where are reason and justice. They find themselves constantly deceived; and by an amusing humility always imagine that the fault is in themselves, and not in the art which all profess to understand. But it is well there are so many of this kind of people in the world, who are not skeptics for the glory of skepticism; to show that man is thoroughly capable of the most extravagant opinions, because he is capable of believing that his weakness is not natural and inevitable, but that on the contrary his wisdom comes by nature.

Nothing fortifies skepticism more than that there are some who are not skeptics. If all were so, they would be wrong.

. . . . . .

Chance gives thoughts, and chance takes them away; there is no art for keeping or gaining them.

A thought has escaped me. I would write it down. I write instead, that it has escaped me.

. . . . . .

The nature of man is not always to go forward,—it has its advances and retreats. Fever has its hot and cold fits, and the cold proves as well as the hot how great is the force of the fever.

. . . . . .

The strength of a man's virtue must not be measured by his occasional efforts, but by his ordinary life.

. . . . . .

We do not remain virtuous by our own power: but by the counterpoise of two opposite vices, we remain standing as between two contrary winds; take away one of these vices, we fall into the other.

. . . . . .

It is not shameful to man to yield to pain, and it is shameful to yield to pleasure. This is not because pain comes from without us, while we seek pleasure; for we may seek pain, and yield to it willingly, without this kind of baseness. How comes it then that reason finds it glorious in us to yield under the assaults of pain, and shameful to yield under the assaults of pleasure? It is because pain does not tempt and attract us. We ourselves choose it voluntarily, and will that it have dominion over us. We are thus masters of the situation, and so far man yields to himself; but in pleasure man yields to pleasure. Now only mastery and empire bring glory, and only slavery causes shame.

. . . . . .

Man is but a reed, weakest in nature, but a reed which thinks. It needs not that the whole Universe should arm to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water is enough to kill him. But were the Universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which has slain him, because he knows that he dies, and that the Universe has the better of him. The Universe knows nothing of this.

. . . . . .

Strife alone pleases us, and not the victory. We like to see beasts fighting, not the victor furious over the vanquished. We wish only to see the victorious end, and as soon as it comes we are surfeited. It is the same in play, and in the search for truth. In all disputes we like to see the clash of opinions, but care not at all to contemplate truth when found. If we are to see truth with pleasure, we must see it arise out of conflict.

So in the passions: there is pleasure in seeing the shock of two contraries, but as soon as one gains the mastery it becomes mere brutality. We never seek things in themselves, but only the search for things. So on the stage: quiet scenes which raise no emotion are worthless; so is extreme and hopeless misery, so are brutal lust and excessive cruelty.

. . . . . .

Caesar, as it seems to me, was too old to set about

amusing himself with the conquest of the world. Such a pastime was good for Augustus or Alexander, who were still young men, and these are difficult to restrain; but Caesar should have been more mature.

. . . . . .

All that is brought to perfection by progress perishes also by progress. All that has been weak can never be absolutely strong. It is in vain to say, "He has grown, he has changed." He is also the same.

. . . . . .

Justice and truth are two such subtle points, that our instruments are too blunt to touch them accurately. If they attain the point, they cover it so completely that they rest more often on the wrong than the right.

. . . . . .

There are vices which only take hold of us by means of others, and these, like branches, fall with the removal of the trunk.

. . . . . .

We are not content with the life we have in ourselves and in our own being; we wish to live an imaginary life in the idea of others, and to this end we strive to make a show. We labor incessantly to embellish and preserve this imaginary being, and we neglect the true. And if we have either calmness, generosity, or fidelity, we hasten to let it be known, that we may attach these virtues to that imaginary being; we would even part with them for this end, and gladly become cowards for the reputation of valor. It is a great mark of the nothingness of our own being that we are not satisfied with the one without the other, and that we often renounce one for the other. For he would be infamous who would not die to preserve his honor.

. . . . . .

Vanity is so anchored in the heart of man that a soldier, a camp-follower, a cook, a porter, makes his boasts, and is for having his admirers; even philosophers wish for them. Those who write against it, yet desire the glory of having written well; those who read, desire

the glory of having read; I who write this have maybe this desire, and perhaps those who will read it.

Whoever will know fully the vanity of man has but to consider the causes and the effects of love. The cause is an unknown quantity, and the effects are terrible. This unknown quantity, so small a matter that we cannot recognize it, moves a whole country, princes, armies, and all the world.

Cleopatra's nose—had it been shorter, the face of the world had been changed.

. . . . . .

Nature imitates herself. A seed sown in good ground brings forth fruit. A principle cast into a good mind brings forth fruit.

. . . . . .

The most unreasonable things in the world become most reasonable because of the unruly lives of men. What is less reasonable than to choose the eldest son of a queen to guide a State? for we do not choose as steersman of a ship that one of the passengers who is of the best family. Such a law would be ridiculous and unjust; but since men are so themselves, and ever will be, it becomes reasonable and just. For would we choose the most virtuous and able, we at once fall to blows, since each asserts that he is the most virtuous and able. Let us then affix this quality to something which cannot be disputed. This man is the king's eldest son. That is clear, and there is no dispute. Reason can do no better, for civil war is the worst of evils.

. . . . . .

Men of unruly lives assert that they alone follow nature, while those who are orderly stray from her paths; as passengers in a ship think that those move who stand upon the shore. Both sides say the same thing. There must be a fixed point to enable us to judge. The harbor decides the question for those who are in the vessel; but where can we find the harbor in morals?

. . . . . .

Those to whom God has given Religion by an instinctive feeling are very blessed, and quite convinced. But as for those who have it not, we can give it them only by reasoning, waiting for the time when God himself shall impress it on their heart, without which faith is useless for salvation.

. . . . . .

The way of the majority is the best way, because it is plain, and has power to make itself obeyed; yet it is the opinion of the least able.

. . . . . .

We care nothing for the present. We anticipate the future as too slow in coming, as if we could make it move faster; or we call back the past, to stop its rapid flight. So imprudent are we that we wander through the times in which we have no part, unthinking of that which alone is ours; so frivolous are we that we dream of the days which are not, and pass by without reflection those which alone exist. For the present generally gives us pain; we conceal it from our sight because it afflicts us, and if it be pleasant we regret to see it vanish away. We endeavor to sustain the present by the future, and think of arranging things not in our power, for a time at which we have no certainty of arriving.

If we examine our thoughts, we shall find them always occupied with the past or the future. We scarcely think of the present; and if we do so, it is only that we may borrow light from it to direct the future. The present is never our end; the past and the present are our means, the future alone is our end. Thus we never live, but hope to live; and while we always lay ourselves out to be happy, it is inevitable that we can never be so.

. . . . . .

Man is not worthy of God, but he is not incapable of being rendered worthy.

It is unworthy of God to unite himself to miserable man, but it is not unworthy of God to raise him from his misery.

. . . . . .

Self-will never will be satisfied, though it should have power for all it would; but we are satisfied from the moment we renounce it. Without it we cannot be discontented, with it we cannot be content.

. . . . . .

I feel that I might not have been, for the "I" consists in my thought; therefore I, who think, had not been had my mother been killed before I had life. So I am not a necessary being. Neither am I eternal nor infinite; but I see plainly there is in nature a necessary being, eternal and infinite.

. . . . . .

We never teach men to be gentlemen, but we teach them everything else; and they never pique themselves so much on all the rest as on knowing how to be gentlemen. They pique themselves only on knowing the one thing they have not learnt.

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I put it down as a fact that if all men knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world.

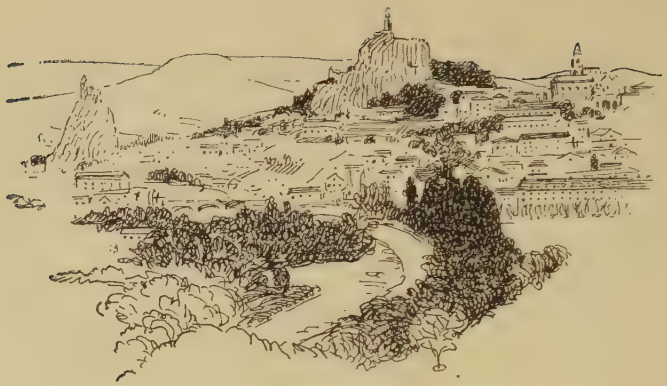
. . . . . .

How foolish is painting, which draws admiration by the resemblance of things of which we do not admire the originals.

IX. Descartes. During the first half of this seventeenth century Rene Descartes (1596–1650), born at La Haye and educated in a Jesuit school, after the beginnings of an active life, retired in a measure to himself, and lived in Paris, in the Netherlands and in Sweden until the time of his death in 1650. During this period of studious activity, Descartes elaborated that system which has given him the name of the "Father of Modern Philosophy." Early in life he found it impossible to accept tradi-

tion and dogma as knowledge and finally reached the point where he refused to believe anything that was not susceptible of absolute proof. The only fact he could find from which to build this system of his was his formula, *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am). From this famous axiom he inferred the existence in man of two natures, the mental and the physical, and innate in the mind he found certain ideas which connected it with the spiritual and the invisible. The essential point in his philosophy is the primal difference between the spirit and matter, between the thinking and the material substances, into one of which classes all things fall. Although his philosophy has been generally discarded, yet he blazed the trail for Locke, Newton and others, who confessed their indebtedness to him and accepted many of his ideas in the work superseding him.

In mathematics he accomplished more perhaps than in philosophy. Having recognized the real meaning of the negative roots of equations and having applied algebra to the solution of geometrical problems, he elaborated the first *Analytical Geometry*. His thoughts were expressed in masterly language, so if the subjects which he treated had been of greater popular interest he would undoubtedly have taken rank among the first literary men of his day.



CHAPTER XI

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION (CONCLUDED)
1592–1643
CORNEILLE

A RETROSPECT. In our discussion of early French literature we said nothing about the drama, preferring to treat the whole subject when the first great representative dramatist should appear. We have now reached the second of the two most notable figures in our so-called period of transition, and before taking up the works of Corneille we must go back to medieval days and look for the origin of the drama which appeared in such masterly form from the pen of the great seventeenth-century writer. In France the medieval drama was rather slow in developing and reached its height only in the closing years of the Middle Ages, but its popularity continued during the first half of the sixteenth century,

and when the people obtained leisure to listen, the audience was ready for theatrical representations of more importance.

Early and scattering comic pieces of the thirteenth century had been forgotten, and no popular drama of a serious nature had appeared, when the Church conceived the idea of presenting in dramatic form those great events which accompanied the establishment of the Christian religion. These Mystery Plays were first introduced by pilgrims returning from the Holy Land who are spoken of as the Fraternity of the Passion, because the crucifixion of Christ was the central incident around which the dramas clustered. These so-called Mystery Plays included the whole history of Christ from His baptism to His death, and many of them, being too long for a single representation, were continued day after day; one, Greban's *Acts of the Apostles,* in sixty-two thousand lines, required the services of five hundred performers and lasted forty days. The Trinity, angels, apostles, devils and more than eighty characters created by the author appeared, the dialogues of the devils, their quarrels and beatings furnishing a comic part that produced great laughter in the assembly. Pomp, magnificence and scenic display were produced by machinery which resembled somewhat that in use in modern theaters, but the stage consisted of three floors, representing heaven above, hell beneath, with the earth between. In time, the various stories of the Old

Testament, with lives of the saints and some subjects from profane history, were treated in a similar way.

The literary value of the Mysteries is not important, but as there were occasional passages of eloquence and feeling, and as the spectators considered the subjects sacred, a profound impression must have been created.

The Moralities differed from the Mysteries in that while they dealt more or less with sacred subjects, their purpose was to teach, and they involved no historical subjects, but were pure inventions of the author. Allegorical personification was common, and in the general type the most important character devoted his powers to advising his companions how to avoid the Pit and arrive at the Heavenly Mansions. Some of the Moralities attacked gluttony, blasphemy, disrespect to parents and other vices, while in the sixteenth century others were devoted to religious arguments. A lower type treated more closely of domestic manners and morals, and from this developed farcical productions which could serve no purpose but the entertainment of the audience. After 1550 we hear little of the Morality.

As a literary transition, we may say that the Mysteries took the place in the public mind of the *Chansons de Geste,* while the farces of which we have just spoken were the natural descendants of the *fabliaux,* which they resembled not only in their brevity but also too frequently in their grossness. One farce, dat-

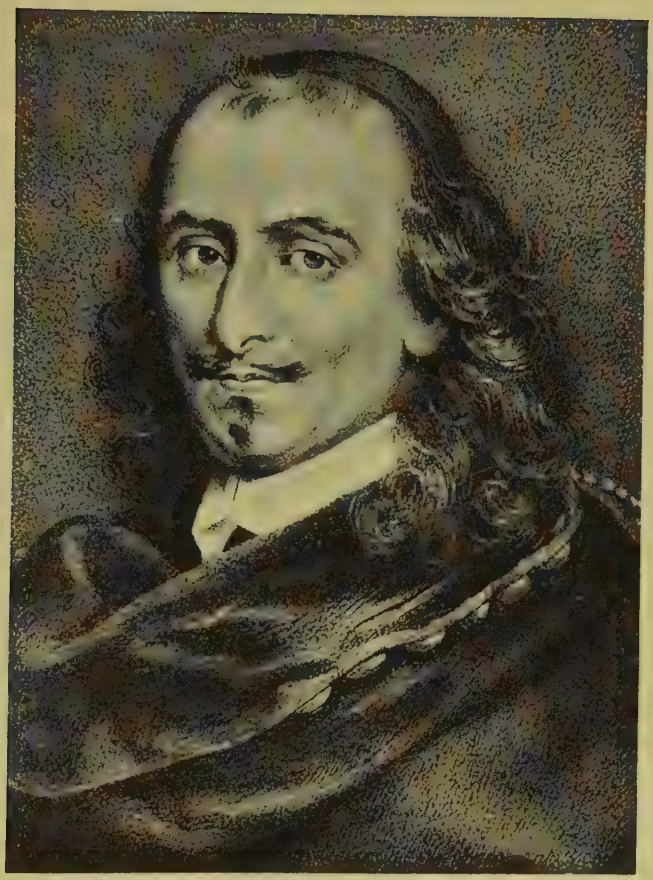
ing from about the year 1470, is of a higher order and approaches in many ways our modern comedy. Pathelin, in spite of hard labor and skillful cheating, is poor and by the use of his utmost art he succeeds in tricking a draper out of cloth enough to make a gown for his faithful Guillemette and a coat for himself. When the draper comes for his money and his dinner of roast goose, Pathelin is in a raving fever and gives the draper no satisfaction. To add to that worthy's discomfiture, his shepherd has stolen his wool and eaten the sheep. When the shepherd is before the court, Pathelin suddenly recovers and appears to defend the accused. His instruction to the latter has been to feign idiocy and to answer every question by the senseless syllable "bee." So well does the shepherd play his part that Pathelin wins his case, but when he attempts to collect his fee the tables are turned, for still the shepherd will make no response but "bee."

By the end of the sixteenth century tragedies, comedies and pastorals were common. The tragedy of the seventeenth century was not a development of the early native drama sketched above, but grew from a study of classic models, which became known among the learned in France about the middle of the sixteenth century and flourished for a time side by side with the popular types of drama.

Professional groups of French actors were numerous, and the old type of amateur actors

had disappeared. Everything was ready for the appearance of a great artist. French taste looked toward the classic drama and demanded the strictest regularity of form, as prescribed by Greek and Latin writers. This was carried to so great an extent that the French Academy laid as one of their criticisms at the door of Corneille the charge that he so feared to sin against the rules of art that he had chosen rather to sin against the rules of nature.

II. Corneille. The history of the modern French drama begins with the publication of Corneille's tragi-comedy, *The Cid,* which was given to the public in 1636, at which time the writer was thirty years old. Pierre Corneille was the son of a lawyer and a magistrate who was raised to the nobility during the early maturity of his son. Pierre was trained by the Jesuits and educated for the law, but he early showed literary ability and devoted himself to the drama, and his first play was presented in Paris in 1629. Five years later he met Richelieu and was assisted by the latter to a considerable extent, but so frank were Corneille's criticisms of his patron's literary productions that he incurred the displeasure of the cardinal, who became unfriendly; in fact, it is known that he stimulated the bitter criticism of Georges Scudery and did many things to embitter the life of the dramatist, who for three years withdrew to Rouen, but thereafter returned to Paris and at once achieved renown. His fall from popularity was almost as rapid



CORNEILLE
1606–1684

as his advancement, and his last years were passed in penury, as he expressed it, "satiated with glory and hungry for money." Two days after the King, at the request of Boileau, had sent a liberal gift to the poet, he died, in 1684.

Corneille was a serious, rugged man with a stern temperament, who never truckled to the powerful or stooped to obtain the patronage which in those days was almost necessary for literary success. He was an affectionate husband and a considerate brother, but in public his manners were brusque and more likely to create ill feeling than to encourage friendship.

His earliest plays were comedies with lively plots, prolific of incidents and with a certain brilliance that made them popular, although there was little in them of permanent worth. It is a fact, however, that the stage is indebted to Corneille for the soubrette, the lively young woman or maidservant who takes the place of the nurse of the classic comedies. To one of these plays he prefixed some verses, in one of which Scudery is made to laud Corneille and bid the stars retire because the sun has arisen, a prophecy more completely realized than is usually the case. However, the most one can say for the early comedies is that they showed the workings of his mind during the time when he was groping for the best medium of expression.

When, however, *The Cid* was produced, the triumph of Corneille's art was immediate, and so marked an epoch did this create in the his-

tory of French drama that we shall consider the play at greater length. *Horace, Cinna* and *Polyeucte,* together with *The Cid,* are his masterpieces, although he wrote many plays in later years.

Corneille imposed the Greek unities on French tragedy, but the matter of unity always troubled him in his composition and he obeyed it with reluctance. In this adherence to the unities he was followed by Racine and others of his successors. The Spanish drama, from which all borrowed to a considerable extent, knew nothing of the unities, and it was on this particular point that Scudery's criticism of *The Cid* was most envenomed. In this production one of the most serious charges against it was its lack of adherence to the unities. In that play unity of place was not strictly followed, as the scene is in four different spots—in the same city, it is true, but the strict observance of this unity would have allowed but one room. The unity of action is not strictly followed, and the unity of time is strained quite to the limit. That the criticism of *The Cid* bore fruit is evidenced from the fact that the next three plays, to which we have already alluded, were taken from classical subjects, in which Corneille was able to observe the unities more freely than he could in those of a more general nature. *Horace* and *Cinna* were produced in 1640, and although the plots were executed under widely different conditions, they show the peculiarities of the poet's genius.

Corneille's tragedies are tragedies of the mind, and are rarely dependent in any way upon external incidents. In *The Cid* it is the struggle between love and filial duty; in *Horace* it is between love and domesticity on the one hand and patriotism on the other; in *Cinna,* love of the fatherland is opposed to magnanimity and patriotism; in *Polyeucte,* a story of Christian martyrdom, life and love are sacrificed to religion. All the other tragedies of Corneille are clustered around the same themes.

Corneille's style is precise, but vigorous and even vehement. Words flow freely from his pen and shrewd sentiments and quotable phrases are numerous. A modern writer, G. L. Strachey, says:

> It is a strange kind of poetry: not that of imaginative vision, of plastic beauty, of subtle feeling; but that of intellectual excitement and spiritual strength. It is the poetry of Malherbe multiplied a thousand fold in vigor and in genius, and expressed in the form most appropriate to it—the dramatic Alexandrine verse. The stuff out of which it is woven, made up, not of the images of sense, but of the processes of thought, is, in fact, simply argument. One can understand how verse created from such material might be vigorous and impressive; it is difficult to imagine how it could also be passionate—until one has read Corneille. Then one realizes afresh the compelling power of genius. His tragic personages, standing forth without mystery, without "atmosphere," without local color, but simply in the clear white light of reason, rivet our attention, and seem at last to seize upon our very souls. Their sentences, balanced, weighty, and voluble, reveal the terrors of destiny, the furies of

love, the exasperations of pride, with an intensity of intellectual precision that burns and blazes. The deeper these strange beings sink into their anguish, the more remorseless their arguments become. They prove their horror in dreadful syllogisms; every inference plunges them farther into the abyss; and their intelligence flames upward to its highest point, when they are finally engulfed.

We began this section with the remark that the publication of *The Cid* marked the creation of the modern French drama. Classical tragedy of the seventeenth century is a combination of the literary classical plays of the sixteenth century originating in Latin or Greek sources and of the tragic comedies of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Aside from the stage settings, the Mystery Plays influenced in no way seventeenth century tragedy. The popular influence is rather from the tragi-comedies, where Italian and Spanish influence predominates. In using the best from these various sources and combining the elements into a literary whole is Corneille's chief contribution to universal literature. If his work is not perfect, yet he led the way for Racine, in whom the classical French drama found its highest expression, and whatever may have been his faults, Corneille was the leading spirit in French literature for twenty years, during which his powerful work contrasts vividly with the "precious" school which still poured from the press the petty love lyrics, sonnets "to my mistress's eyebrow," and slight things of that nature.

III. "THE CID." The following, the author claims, is the historic foundation for his great play:

> A few days before, he had fought with Don Gomez, Count de Gormaz, and vanquished and slew him. This brought about his marriage with Dona Ximena, daughter and heiress of this same count. She herself requested the King to give her Rodrigo as a husband, or to punish him according to law, for having killed her father. The marriage was satisfactory to every one. She had a large dowry, and he was heir to a rich estate.

Although his subject had appeared in a Spanish drama by De Castro, yet his treatment is original and converts what was nothing but chronicle-history into a powerful tragedy with a happy ending. In our consideration of Spanish literature we have already given considerable attention to the Cid, so that his position as one of the world heroes is well known, but we found nothing that told us of the heart-struggles which must have taken place before his marriage; at least, we have no such picture of them as that which Corneille gives.

The scene of the play is laid at Seville. In the first act the governess Elvire assures Chimene that her father favors her marriage with Roderick (the Cid), whom she loves, rather than with Sancho, who is deeply in love with her. Chimene, the daughter of the Count of Gormaz, receives this communication with pleasure, but still shows that she fears a disappointment. The Spanish Infanta, Urraque, declares to her governess, Leonora, that she

favors the love of Chimene and Roderick in order to quiet her own passion, which is quite hopeless, because a king's daughter cannot marry a simple knight. While this disclosure is being made, a page announces that Chimene is in waiting, and the two go out to meet her. Gomez, the Count of Gormaz, has been appointed tutor to the King's son, while Diegue, the father of Roderick, has been a prominent aspirant for the position and has expected to receive the appointment. The two meet and quarrel, and the Count, in anger, strikes Diegue, who is too old and decrepit to defend himself. The latter draws his sword, but is unable to use it. Roderick enters after the Count has retired, and is told by his father that he must take vengeance. In a bitter soliloquy Roderick determines to defend the honor of his house, though he knows that he will lose Chimene by so doing.

In the second act Arias, a courtier, advises the Count to submit to the King's expressed wish and make amends to Diegue, but the Count's pride is too great and he speaks harshly not only of Diegue, but of the King himself. At this point Roderick enters, and the Count offers his friendship and expresses his wish that the young man should marry Chimene, but Roderick rejects everything, challenges the Count, and the two go out to fight. The Infanta tries to console Chimene, who has heard of the approaching duel, and offers to imprison Roderick, so that he shall

be unable to meet her father, but before this can be done they are informed that Roderick and the Count have departed. The love of the Infanta grows stronger when she sees the probability that Chimene and her lover will be separated. The King expresses his anger at the Count's act, and while he is talking a courtier announces that the Moors in great numbers are rapidly approaching the city and promise to lay siege to it. A page also enters and announces that the Count and Roderick have fought, and that the former has been killed. Chimene demands justice of the King, including the death of Roderick, who has killed her father. Diegue claims that the responsibility for the Count's death rests on him and offers to die in his son's place.

The next act opens with Roderick in the house of Chimene, telling Elvire, the nurse, that he has come to offer his life to Chimene, as he recognizes the impossibility of her forgiving him or ever wishing to marry him. Elvire urges him to fly while he has time, as she knows that Chimene and Sancho are approaching. Roderick refuses, and Sancho offers to fight him. Chimene tells Elvire she still loves Roderick, but that he must be slain in vengeance for her father's death; then she herself will die. Roderick now makes to Chimene the proffer he has intended and offers his sword to her, but she refuses to give the blow. After an argument, it is decided that she will not sacrifice him herself, but that only his death will

satisfy her. As Roderick is leaving, he meets his father, who informs him that the Moors are about the city and advises him to redeem himself in the eyes of the King by driving the Moors away. In the opening of his conversation, Diegue utters these words:

> Never a perfect happiness is ours;
> Our best achievements have their bitter drop;
> In each event, whate'er its promise be,
> Care troubles still the currents of our peace.
> In my rejoicing o'er my honor saved,
> An anxious fear now seizes on my soul.

In the fourth act Elvire announces to Chimene the overwhelming victory of Roderick, who comes from the scene of conflict bringing with him two captive Moorish kings in fetters bound, which he with joy presents to the King, hoping that he will see the conqueror and forgive. Chimene asks if Roderick is wounded, and on being told that he is not, says:

> I'll take again my weak heart's failing wrath!
> Must I forget myself in thought of him!
> Shall my lips join in praises of his deeds!
> While honor's mute, and duty, dull, consents?
> Be still, my love, and let my anger swell!
> What are two conquered kings? My father's slain!
> This mourning garb, which speaks of my distress,
> Is the first token of his wondrous might!
> Others may call his deeds magnanimous;
> Here, every object testifies his crime.
> May all this somber pomp which wraps me round—
> This sweeping veil, these heavy depths of crepe—
> Add force to my resentment, fail it ever;
> Nor let my love my honor overcome.

Should fond, alluring passion e'er prevail,
Recall my duty to my wavering mind,
And bid me fearless meet this hero proud.

The Infanta pleads with Chimene for the life of Roderick, but the maiden seems obdurate. The King praises him, and Roderick, replying, gives at the King's request a description of the way in which he defeated the Moors:

I take the lead, and, with defiant front,
The little column slowly makes advance;
Five hundred at the starting, but ere long
Three thousand was our number, strong and bold.
The frightened gathered courage at the sight.
A certain part I hurriedly conceal
In vessels lying at the river's mouth;
The rest, whose numbers every hour increased,
Impatient for the fray, with me remain.
Close to the ground they crouched, and, still as death,
They passed the night, nor slept, nor scarcely breathed.
At my command, pretended, sire, from you,
The guard itself conceals, and aids my plot.
Just as the flow of tide comes rolling in,
By starlight pale, lo! thirty Moorish sails,
Mounting the wave, sweep to the harbor's mouth.
They enter; all seems tranquil; not a guard,
No soldiers on the quay, none on the walls.
Our ambush is complete, and fearlessly,
Not doubting their attack a full surprise,
They anchor, and debark; suspecting naught,
They rush into the embraces of their foes.
We spring from every hiding-place, and loud
A thousand cries of battle rise to heaven.
Then from the ships pour forth our armed men;
But half have sprung to land when, terror-struck,
They see the fight is lost ere 'tis begun.
They came for pillage; they encounter war.
We press them on the water, on the land;

Their blood, in rivers, flows upon our soil,
While dire disorder hinders all resistance.
But soon their leaders rally them with shouts,
Their panic is dispelled, their ranks are formed,
Their terrors are forgotten in their fury.
To die without a struggle were a shame,
And bravely with their sabers they oppose.
On sea, on land, on fleet, within the port,
All was a field of carnage, death its lord.
Their blood and ours in horrid mixture ran.
Brave deeds were wrought which never will be known;
The darkness was a veil, 'neath which each man
Fought as it were alone; nor any knew
How victory inclined. I praised my men,
Placed reinforcements here, changed orders there,
Nor knew till dawn which side was conqueror.
But day made clear our gain and their defeat.
Their courage fails them, with the fear of death;
And when they see approach a fresh command,
They seek their ships, cut cables, and their cries
Of terror and of anguish fill the air.
They wait not to discover if their kings
Are dead or wounded: in a tumult wild,
On the ebb-tide which bore them in at flood,
They take their desperate flight and quit our shores.
The kings and others, left without retreat
Or hope of succor, make a valiant stand;
They sell their lives at cost of life in turn,
And fight till nearly every man is dead.
I urge surrender, but they listen not,
Till the last follower falls, when yield they must.
Then the two kings demand to see the chief;
I tell them who I am, they seek my grace;
I send them straightway to your Majesty.
So the fight ended, lacking combatants.
'Twas in this manner, sire, that for your cause—

The King is disposed to forgive Roderick and restore him to his position, but Chimene

appears and again demands vengeance, which the King refuses, but is finally persuaded to leave the decision to a combat between Roderick and some knight chosen by Chimene, in accordance with an old but long neglected custom in the realm. Sancho agrees to defend Chimene, and the latter promises to marry him if he wins, but the King insists that she must marry the winner, whoever he may be.

The fifth act redeems the tragedy. Roderick tells Chimene that he intends to allow Sancho to kill him, but she pleads with him, and finally acknowledges that if he wins the battle she will pardon him and be his bride. The Infanta bemoans her lot from disappointed love, but professes to Elvire that as the Cid has by his bravery made himself equal in station with her she may yet win him. Sancho comes rushing in with drawn sword immediately after the combat, and Chimene, seeing him, thinks he has slain Roderick, regrets her decision, protests that she cannot marry him, and begs the King to release her from her promise, because she loves only Roderick. In the torrent of her explanations Sancho has no opportunity to say that not only did he fail to kill Roderick, but that the latter has had him wholly at his mercy and granted him life, when in an utterly helpless condition. The Infanta sees now the hopelessness of her love and urges Chimene to take Roderick, who has entered and offered his life to the King. Chimene herself intercedes and accepts Roderick.

IV. EXTRACTS FROM "POLYEUCTE." *Polyeucte,* published in 1643, is a story of Christian martyrdom in which Polyeuctus, the martyr, sacrifices to his faith not only his life but his love as well, and the wife who gave him an imperfect love while she considered him imperfect, is won by his heroism, both to him and to God. Thus is she deprived of her tenderness for Severus, who through her is made magnanimous. The following extract is Paulina's appeal to Severus, as translated by W. F. Nokes:

Severus. I stand agaze,
Rooted, confounded, in sheer wonderment.
Such blind resolve is so unparalleled,
I scarce may trust the witness of mine ears.
A heart that loves you—and what heart so poor
That knowing, loves you not?—one loved of you,
To leave regretless so much bliss just won!
Nay, more—as though it were a fatal prize—
To his corrival straight to yield it up!
Truly, or wondrous manias Christians have,
Or their self-happiness must be sans bourn,
Since to attain it they will cast away
What others at an empire's cost would win.
For me, had fate, a little sooner kind,
Blessed my true service with your hand's reward,
The glory of your eyes had been my worship;
My twin kings had they reigned—kings? nay, my gods!
To dust, to powder, had I grinded been
E'er I had—

Paulina. Hold! let me not hear too much;
Let not the smoldering embers of old time
Relume to speech unworthy of us both.
Severus, know Paulina utterly:
His latest hour my Polyeuctus nears;

Nay, scarce a minute has he yet to live.
You all unwittingly have been the cause
Of this his death. I know not if your thoughts,
Their portals opening to your wish's knock,
Have dared to some wild hope give harboring,
Based upon his undoing; but know well,
No death so cruel I would not boldly front,
Hell hath no tortures I would not endure,
Or e'er my stainless honor I would spot,
My hand bestowing upon any man
Who anywise were his death's instrument.
And could you for such madness deem me apt,
Hate would replace my erstwhile tender love.
You're generous—still be so, to the end:
My father fears you; is in mood to grant
All you might ask; ay, I e'en dare aver
That if my husband he do sacrifice,
'Twill be to you. Save then your hapless victim;
Bestir yourself; stretch him your helping hand!
That this is much to claim of you, I know,
But more the effort's great, the more the glory!
To save a rival 'spite of rivalry
Were greatness all particular to you.
And—be that not enough for your renown—
'Twere much to let a woman erst so loved,
And haply who may yet be somewhat dear,
Her greatest treasure owe to your great heart.
In fine, remember that you are Severus!
Adieu! alone determine of your course;
For if you be not all I think you are,
I'd still, not knowing it, believe you such.

OLD STREET IN TOURS

CHAPTER XII

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV
ROMANCE AND LETTERS

INTRODUCTORY. We have seen that when in 1643 Louis XIV ascended the throne the conditions were all prepared for a brilliant display in literature as in everything else. In every department works had been produced that showed the possibilities of the French language and established its limitations. A few great writers had appeared, and much was accomplished during the early years of his reign, but it was only after the period we discussed in the last chapter that great literature was plentifully produced.

We have gone sufficiently into the history of the times to show the principal causes which produced the happy culmination, but not enough has been said concerning Louis himself, who was during the latter half of the seventeenth century the most important influence tending to perfection in literature. All-powerful as a sovereign, a man of strong personality, and interested himself in literature, he made his court a center of knowledge and gave to the people who lived in it a feeling of security. The predominance of the King shows itself in all the writings of the age, and the fact is not surprising when we consider that he fostered literature in every possible way, improved the position of literary men by granting pensions to some and giving others high offices of state, and by encouraging the people to buy brought success and emolument through its liberality. On the eloquence of the pulpit and on the drama his influence was most marked; against the lighter forms of literature he showed some prejudice, perhaps owing to the fact that the writers of such things might well be suspected of a certain unfriendliness toward him which they dared not express, but which he might infer from their productions. Notwithstanding this fact he was a strong supporter of Moliere and his comedians.

The center of the aristocratic court was the stately palace of Versailles, with its wonderful gardens, bearing great trees transplanted from distant forests; its great fountains fed by

streams diverted from amazing distances; containing smaller parks on various sides, all contributing to make a stupendous home for magnificence, luxury and refinement. Versailles expressed the idea of the age—splendor, display, glory, power—and literature reflected it all. It was a literature of aristocracy; refined, select, and having the certain narrowness which must arise from such conditions. Curiously enough, too, the great majority of the writers were not themselves aristocratic, but were people of genius standing just outside the charmed circle and drawing their life from it. The result of this position was to make them intense, earnest, anxious to please, and to a high degree professional in the work, traits that the aristocratic amateur would not be likely to show. That there were exceptions to this rule and that some of the aristocrats were skilled in literature we shall soon see. That underneath the lavish magnificence of the court of Louis there lived a ruined peasantry and a bankrupt France now and then appears in the writings of the age, but as yet the evidence of it all was not conclusive nor persistent in urging itself upon the attention of the nobles. That remained for a later age.

It was a bright and glorious world in which these old French nobles lived, and the writings of the period shine with a brilliance which may well justify us in speaking of that time as the Golden Age of French Literature, for not only were there works of flawless art produced in

LOUIS XIV

1638–1715

THE "GRAND MONARCH" OF FRANCE. ALL-POWERFUL AS A SOVEREIGN, AND INTERESTED HIMSELF IN LITERATURE, HE MADE HIS COURT A CENTER OF KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURE.

almost every department, but they were of such universal interest and were produced in such numbers that they added appreciably to the great stock of world literature.

II. Madame de La Fayette. One of the charming, though often misunderstood, figures of the court of Louis XIV was Marie Madeline Pioche de la Vergne, Countess de La Fayette, who may be remembered as a prominent figure in the salons of her day; as the intimate friend of Madame de Sevigne and La Rochefoucauld; as a writer of entertaining letters, of sparkling history, and at least one story which, if it does not mark an epoch in the development of the novel, was yet the first to appear in an entirely new field. She was born in 1634, and her marriage with the Marquis of La Fayette was one of "convenience" only and terminated soon by his death. At the Hotel de Rambouillet and later in her own salon, she was one of the leaders, and it is now known from her letters that for a long time she played an important part in the politics of the court. After the death of her husband, she formed an intimate friendship with La Rochefoucauld and subjected herself to a great deal of criticism. After the death of the Duke, she went into retirement and lived for thirteen years devoted to a life of penance. Besides her charming letters and an historical novel, she wrote a short story, *Mlle. de Montpensier,* a novel, *Zayde,* neither of which is of importance, and then about six years later (1677) she produced

The Princess of Cleves, the novel alluded to above. The first two of these appeared under the name of her friend Segrais, who laid no claim to their authorship. With the third there was no actual concealment of authorship, but there was so much of mystification that critics supposed it to be the work of La Rochefoucauld, though it is now known positively to have been written by Madame de La Fayette.

III. "The Princess of Cleves." The sensation produced by the appearance of *The Princess of Cleves* was marked, for in respect to subject-matter and plot it was possessed of great originality and opened a new school of fiction. The uncertainty of its authorship enhanced its earlier popularity. Madame de Scudery wrote, "The book is an orphan, disowned by both father and mother," and the court was alive with speculation concerning the parentage. For the first time in romance, the heroine was a married woman, and the plot concerned itself with the mind rather than with external incidents. Heretofore, the only attempts at psychological analysis had been made in the drama, but now the mental struggles of a human being were of chief importance. All great modern novels are concerned principally with the analysis of character, and the development of the plot hinges upon the mentality of the characters. Madame de La Fayette was unable to produce a work which compares favorably with the powerful novels of later writers, yet it is admitted that she wrote one

of the masterpieces among French novels. It is, perhaps, incorrect to say that the new era in fiction began with her book, for it had no successors, and the modern novel developed from different sources.

While *The Princess of Cleves* may be considered a work of the imagination, yet there is a certain historical significance to it and a reality in its descriptions which make it of value as a picture of the times in which it was written. Although the scene is laid in the court of Henry II, the heroine is undoubtedly Madame de La Fayette herself. The Prince of Cleves is the Count de La Fayette, and the Duke de Nemours is La Rochefoucauld. The work is unique and deserves an analysis.

The time is supposed to be near the end of the reign of Henry II of France. The author begins with an account of the different personages about the court, and describes conditions and political views with a strict historical truthfulness. Among the ladies of the court is the gay and frivolous Mary Stuart, whom we know so much better in her tragic after-life. The most distinguished among the nobles is the Duke de Nemours, a gallant and personally attractive man, whose position is so high that he is sent to congratulate Queen Elizabeth on her accession to the throne, with a suggestion that he try to marry her. As this intimation was given him by the King, he sends a messenger to England to investigate his chances and goes on a visit to the Duke of Savoy.

While he is away from court at this time, an extremely beautiful girl, who has been educated in the provinces by her mother, Madame de Chartres, appears, and collects about herself a crowd of brilliant aspirants, who are much smitten with her beauty, dignity, wealth and position. From among this number she dutifully selects the Prince of Cleves and marries him, although she feels no deep affection for him, in spite of the fact that he is the most ardent of lovers.

Meanwhile, the Duke de Nemours has learned that his expedition to England is likely to be successful, and he prepares to go thither, but before doing so returns to Paris, where, without previous ceremony of introduction, he is told by the King to lead a dance with the young Princess of Cleves. Not knowing who she is, the Duke immediately falls so deeply in love with her that he abandons entirely his trip to England and, concealing his passion from every one, devotes himself to the friendly service of the Princess. About this time her mother dies, and thus, left alone without any affection for her husband, she becomes sensible of the delicate and continued attentions of the Duke and learns through her woman's instinct the depth of his affections. Finding at last that she is unwillingly yielding her love to the Duke, she goes into a retirement, from which, however, the Prince of Cleves is extremely anxious to bring her back to court. Knowing that she will be obliged to meet the Duke de

Nemours every day, she declines her husband's invitation and retires to Coulommiers, a beautiful country-seat of the Prince, about a day's journey from Paris.

The Duke de Nemours, learning where she is staying, goes hunting in that vicinity, and entering the grounds of the Prince's estate, finds his way to a summer house. Just as he enters, he sees the Prince and his wife approaching, and nothing is left the intruder but to conceal himself in the summer house, where he is a forced listener to a very remarkable confession. The Prince is urging his wife to return to Paris, but she continually expresses her reluctance until he begins to suspect that there is some serious reason for her disinclination to go back. She protests that she has nothing on her mind, but after a time yields to the renewed persuasions of her husband and says:

Well, sir, I am going to make you a confession such as no woman has ever made to her husband; the innocence of my actions and of my intentions gives me strength to do so. It is true that I have reasons for keeping aloof from the court, and I wish to avoid the perils that sometimes beset women of my age. I have never given the slightest sign of weakness; and I should never fear displaying any, if you would leave me free to withdraw from court, or if Madame de Chartres still lived to guide my actions. Whatever the dangers of the course I take, I pursue it with pleasure, in order to keep myself worthy of you. I beg your pardon a thousand times if my feelings offend you; at any rate I shall never offend you by my actions. Remember that to do what I am now doing requires more friendship and esteem for a husband than

any one has ever had. Guide me, take pity on me, love me if you can.

While she continues speaking the Prince sits with his head in his hands, really beside himself, and when she has finished and he sees her face wet with tears and yet so beautiful, he thinks he must die of grief. He knows she is the soul of loyalty. He kisses her, helps her to her feet, and remarks:

Do you, madame, take pity on me, for I deserve it; and excuse me if in the first moments of a grief so poignant as mine I do not respond as I should to your appeal. You seem to me worthier of esteem and admiration than any woman that ever lived; but I also regard myself as the unhappiest of men. The first moment that I saw you, I was filled with love of you; neither your indifference to me nor the fact that you are my wife has cooled it: it still lives. I have never been able to make you love me, and I see you fear you love another. And who, madame, is the happy man that inspires this fear? Since when has he charmed you? What has he done to please you? What was the road he took to your heart? I found some consolation for not having touched it, in the thought that it was beyond any one's reach; but another has succeeded where I have failed. I have all the jealousy of a husband and of a lover; but it is impossible to suffer as a husband after what you have told me. Your noble conduct makes me feel perfectly secure, and even consoles me as a lover. Your confidence and your sincerity are infinitely dear to me; you think well enough of me not to suppose that I shall take any unfair advantage of this confession. You are right, madame,—I shall not; and I shall not love you less. You make me happy by the greatest proof of fidelity that a woman ever gave her husband; but madame, go on and tell me who it is you are trying to avoid.

The Prince, however, urges her in vain to tell the name of her adorer, but after long persuasion induces her to return to court. Here the Prince cannot rest until he knows who is in reality the lover of his wife, and finally, by a stratagem, he discovers that it is the Duke of Nemours, but there is not in his mind any suspicion of the purity and integrity of his wife.

After the writer has given an excellent picture of the tragic death of King Henry and its political effects, the Duke and the Prince depart for the coronation of the young King at Rheims. Meanwhile, the Princess again retires to Coulommiers, and while there is visited by a lady, who on returning to the court describes the solitariness of the Princess and her habitual visits to a beautiful pavilion in the forest. The Duke hears this story and resolves to go to Coulommiers and watch for an opportunity to see the Princess, who has persistently declined to meet him since her return to Paris. The Prince of Cleves suspects the Duke and engages a spy to follow him. Nemours enters the garden of the Princess and watches her through an open window, becoming more and more infatuated every moment. He sees her look at his picture, and knows that she loves him. So great is his excitement that he moves carelessly and is detected by the Princess, who leaves him permanently and without a word. The spy, however, in making a report of his discoveries, casts some reflection on the

Princess, and Cleves is so overwhelmed with grief that he falls into a deadly fever. The Princess comes to Rheims at once to nurse him, but her tender administrations are of no avail and, having informed her that her conduct has broken his heart, the Prince expires.

The grief of the Princess is inconsolable, for she feels that in a way she is responsible for the terrible tragedy. The Duke testifies in many ways his respectful and fervent love, but at last in an interview the Princess tells him firmly that she has determined to remain unmarried, for two reasons: first, because in a measure she feels that the Duke is responsible for the death of her husband; and secondly, that she is so devotedly attached to the Duke that she is afraid marriage would put an end to her affection or to his love, and that finally she would be tormented by jealousy or his coldness. Therefore she returns to her estate in the Pyrenees, where after a long illness she again refuses to see the Duke and spends the remainder of her life in exercise of charity and devotion.

The purity of heart and dignified conduct of the Princess of Cleves are admirably delineated, and a more beautiful character is difficult to find. Perhaps Madame de La Fayette looks with too lenient an eye on the moral laxity of the court and the King, but it must be remembered that Louis was so thoroughly the ideal of the aristocracy that even his vices appeared virtues—or at least were glossed

over by people who themselves might be rigidly puritanical.

IV. La Rochefoucauld. François VI, Duke of La Rochefoucauld and Prince of Marsillac, was born in Paris in 1613 of one of the greatest families in France. His life naturally divides itself into two epochs: the first, one of intense activity in the politics of his time, during which he became a leader in the rebellion of the Fronde, only to be defeated and disillusioned; and the second period, one in which he lived a life of bitter reflection, consoled, however, by many loyal friendships, some social distinction and a unique reputation as a writer.

At sixteen he had joined the army, and had been nominally married to a young lady of whom little is known. While still in service, he became attached to Madame de Chevreuse and through her to Queen Anne, after which he intrigued against Richelieu and was engaged in the Fronde, as we have seen. At the battle in the Faubourg-Saint Antoine in 1652 he was shot in the head and was compelled to enter into that retirement which gradually became the ruling habit in his life. Having returned to court, however, he became a prominent figure in the literary salons of Madame de Sable and Madame de Sevigne, and formed that close and intimate friendship with Madame de La Fayette, of which we have spoken. At the age of sixty-seven La Rochefoucauld, one of the most famous of Frenchmen, died in the arms of Bossuet.

The most important writings of La Rochefoucauld are his *Memoirs,* relating to the period of the Fronde, and his *Maxims,* a collection of some seven hundred epigrammatic views on life and human character. The *Maxims* bespeak for the author a melancholy character and a thorough disillusionment with affairs of the world. He has been accused of great egotism and of teaching pure selfishness, yet there is much to be said against this view. He did know the world as few men have had the opportunity to know it, and he expressed his feelings with cynical directness, yet always in such a way as to convey the impression that in spite of the satire he believes the world to be a very good place, in which whatever exists is about as it should be. The central idea of the book is expressed in its motto: "Our virtues are commonly our vices in disguise." He does not consider the love of God or parental or filial affections, but finds in each apparently disinterested act a manifestation of self-love. "When vices desert us, we flatter ourselves with the belief that it is we that desert them;" "Virtues lose themselves in self-interest, as rivers lose themselves in the sea;" "In the adversity of our best friends, we always find something that does not displease us," are some of the maxims of the remorseless cynic.

In respect to style, the maxims are matchless. They are clear, clean-cut, sharp as a diamond, but the very excellence and precision pall upon him who reads them continuously; singly,

they go unerringly to the mark, but the mind grows weary of their monotonous excellence when read in numbers.

V. EXTRACTS FROM THE "MAXIMS." The following are some of the briefer maxims taken at random from the great work:

Happiness is in relish, and not in things: it is by having what we like that we are happy, and not in having what others find likable.

Philosophy triumphs easily over troubles passed and troubles to come; but present troubles triumph over it.

It requires greater virtue to bear good fortune than bad.

We promise according to our hopes, and we perform according to our fears.

No one deserves to be praised for goodness, unless he has strength to be bad: all other goodness is most often only sloth or weakness of will.

Too great eagerness to requite an obligation is a kind of ingratitude.

Hypocrisy is a homage which vice renders to virtue.

We have more strength than will; and it is often to excuse ourselves to ourselves that we imagine that things are impossible.

Nearly every one takes pleasure in acknowledging small obligations; many are grateful for common ones; but there is scarcely any one who is not ungrateful for great ones.

Those who occupy themselves too much with small things usually become incapable of great.

We have strength enough to bear the ills of others.

We may find women who have never had a gallantry, but it is rare to find any who have only had one.

We are never so happy or so unhappy as we imagine.

Every one complains of his memory, and no one complains of his judgment.

We often do good to be able to do harm with impunity.

There are heroes in evil as well as in good.

There is no disguise which can hide love long where it is, or feign it where it is not.

Grace is to the body what good sense is to the mind.

The gratitude of most men is only a secret desire to obtain greater favors.

Gravity is a physical cloak invented to hide mental defects.

True eloquence consists in saying all that is needed, and in saying only what is needed.

There are some good marriages, but no delightful ones.

Refinement of mind consists in thinking on proper and delicate things.

We give nothing so liberally as advice.

It is as common to see tastes change as it is uncommon to see inclinations change.

The ruin of a neighbor pleases friends and enemies.

We often forgive those who bore us, but we cannot forgive those whom we bore.

Nothing prevents us from being natural so much as the desire to appear so.

Absence diminishes moderate passions and increases great ones, as wind puts out candles and inflames fire.

There are bad people who would be less dangerous if there was no good in them.

In jealousy there is more of self-love than of love.

Quarrels would not last long if the wrong were only on one side.

Whatever shame we may have deserved, it is almost always in our power to re-establish our reputation.

Most young people think they are natural when they are only unpolished and rude.

Love, pleasant as it is, pleases even more by the ways in which it shows itself than by itself.

We forgive as long as we love.

What makes the vanity of others unbearable to us is, that it wounds our own.

We prefer seeing those to whom we do good, to seeing those who do good to us.

We find few sensible people except those who are of our way of thinking.

We sometimes think we hate flattery, but we only hate the way in which we are flattered.

It is never more difficult to talk well than when we are ashamed to be silent.

VI. Madame de Sevigne. For most of our account of Madame de Sevigne and the extracts we make from her charming letters we are indebted to the interesting little work of Miss Thackeray (Mrs. Richmond Ritchie). Marie de Rabutin-Chantal was born in 1626, the daughter of an ancient Burgundian family which owned ruined castles, feudal rights and coats of arms that had been upheld for centuries by fire-eating barons and which at one time had possessed among its members a canonized saint in the person of the grandmother of the subject of this sketch. The father of Marie, within a year after marriage, fought as second in a duel, was obliged to flee from the court, and in a subsequent encounter was killed when his daughter was little more than a year old and himself but thirty-one.

The education of the little girl was in the hands of the Abbe de Coulanges, her maternal uncle, who was about nineteen years her senior and who proved to be her tender and considerate friend through life. Of her girlhood we have little account, but in 1644 she married the Marquis de Sevigne, the rich, handsome, witty inheritor of three centuries of noble blood. However, her married life was un-

happy, and after seven years terminated in the death of her unfaithful husband in a duel.

In 1646 Madame de Sevigne's first child was born, "the prettiest girl in France," as she was known, and through all her life the idol of her mother. From the time of her husband's death Madame de Sevigne devoted herself entirely to her children, and the greater part of that remarkable collection of letters, which is the admiration of every reader, owes its origin to the passion of the mother for her absent daughter. Madame lived until 1696, when her daughter became ill of the smallpox and the aged mother exhausted herself in ceaseless ministrations. Madame de Grignan recovered, but the Marquise, in spite of faithful nursing by her friends, died of the same disease before her daughter had fully recovered strength.

The following charming description of Madame de Sevigne was written by the Abbe Arnauld, brother of Mere Angelique of Port Royal, six years after her death.

> It seems to me that I still see her before my eyes as she appeared to me the first time I ever had the honor of beholding her, when she arrived, sitting in the depths of her great chariot, that was thrown open wide. On either side of her sat the young gentleman her son, and the young lady her daughter—all three such as those whom the poets have described. They recalled to me Latona with the young Apollo and the young Diana, so indescribable a charm radiated from all of them—from the mother and the children.

In one of her attenuated novels, Madame de Scudery gives us the following description of

Madame de Sevigne, who figures as the Princess Clarinte:

Princess Clarinte has blue eyes, full of life and expression. She dances with marvelous grace, and charms all hearts. Her voice is sweet and melodious, and she sings in a passionate manner. She reads a great deal, although she has few pretensions to being learned. She has learnt the Italian language, and she prefers certain little Italian songs, which please her better than those of her own country. She has found means (without either being severe or misanthropical) to keep a good reputation in a great court, where she receives all the honest people, and inspires affection in all hearts that are capable of feeling it. This same pleasant temper, which becomes her so well, and diverts others as well as herself, enables her to make friends with many who, if they dared, would be glad to pass for her lovers. She says, laughing, that she has never been in love with anything but her own good name, and that she watches it with jealousy. When it is necessary, she can leave the world and the court, and enjoy country life with the same tranquillity as if she had been born and bred in the woods. She returns to us gay and beautiful, as if she had never left Paris. She wins the hearts of all women, as well as those of men. She writes as she speaks—that is to say, in the most courteous and agreeable manner. I have never seen so much charm united with so much light of intellect, such innocence and virtue. Nobody else has ever better known the art of being graceful without affectation, witty without malice, gay without folly, modest without constraint, and virtuous without severity.

Hallam Tennyson has translated from the Abbe of Montreuil the following lines, which he dedicates "to the Marquise de Sevigne playing at blindman's-buff:"

Your right is to enthrall,—
You charm in every way;

But surely, most of all,
You charm us all to-day.
Your blindfold eyes we see,
And deem you "Love"—none other:
Your blindfold eyes we free,
And lo! you are "Love's mother."

The art of letter writing has never been more perfectly exemplified than in the epistles of Madame de Sevigne, who conversed as freely and naturally by means of her pen as any one could speak in cultivated society. She had wonderful opportunities for observing the life of the court; she had wide acquaintance among the leading personages of the day and met them frequently in the famous salons of the age. She was an intimate personal friend of Madame de La Fayette and of La Rochefoucauld, and during the long period of her separation from her married daughter she threw herself into her correspondence with the ardor of a lover. Apparently she had the most exquisite sense of the power and fitness of words and possessed the ability to catch the spirit of an occasion, crystallize it and convey it perfectly to the reader. All phases of her life and the life of those around her are pictured with a gayety, wit, and sometimes with a maliciousness, that charms the reader to-day, and it is probable that our ideas of the life and character of the courtiers of Louis XIV have been more definitely fixed by the letters of Madame de Sevigne than by the more serious histories which it has been our lot to read. But

for the second half of the seventeenth century the letters of Madame de Sevigne may be considered one of the real historical sources, and it is generally admitted that her pictures of the petty intrigues, the spites and follies of the day, as well as of the more serious happenings which concerned the King, his court and the aristocracy in general, are reliable and true to life. Madame de Sevigne was not a deep thinker, but she so clearly and vividly reproduced what she heard and, withal, in so intimate and charming a way that her gossip loses its malice, and we are conscious only of the reality of the persons whom it concerns. Her literary style is nervous and full of vitality, and though her sentences are somewhat involved, the meaning is always clear. More nearly than almost anything else in literature, her writings approach ordinary speech with its elisions, omissions and frequent changes in thought, yet she has been able to preserve continuity and clearness throughout.

VII. Extracts from Madame de Sevigne. 1. *The Trial of Fouquet.* Graphic and interesting indeed is the following description of Fouquet's trial and his courageous bearing in adversity:

To-day, Monday, Nov. 17th, 1664, M. Fouquet was examined for the second time. He sat down without ceremony, as he did on the first occasion, and the Chancellor again desired him to put up his hand and to take his oath. He replied that he had already given the reasons which must prevent his taking the oath. Thereupon the Chan-

cellor rushed at once into a great discourse to prove the legitimate powers of the Chamber—that the King had established it, &c.

M. Fouquet answered that often things were done by authority which afterwards, upon reflection, did not appear to be quite advisable.

The Chancellor interrupted him. "What! you then say that the King abuses his power?"

M. Fouquet replied, "You say so, sir, not I. That is not what I think; and I wonder that, in the condition in which I am, you should wish to oppose me to the King."

On the 20th of the same month she writes:

M. Fouquet was questioned upon the affair of the gold pieces this morning. He answered very well: several of the judges bowed to him. The Chancellor made this a subject of reproach, and said it was not the custom. As he was returning by the arsenal on foot for exercise, M. Fouquet asked who were those workmen he perceived. He was told that they were people altering the basin of a fountain. He went up to them and gave his advice; and then turning to D'Artagnan (the Hedzoff of those days), "Do you wonder that I should interfere? I was formerly considered clever at these sort of things."

21st.— . . . M. Fouquet was rendered very impatient by certain objections made, which seemed to him ridiculous. He showed his impatience too much, and answered with a haughtiness which gave displeasure. He will correct himself, for this manner is not good; but in the truth, patience fails one at times and it seems to me I should do as he does.

Some days after she writes:

M. Fouquet entered the Chamber this morning, and was interrogated about the city rates. He was very badly attacked, and defended himself very well, although this is one of the most dangerous places of the whole affair.

I know not what good angel warned him that he had been too proud. He corrected himself of his pride to-

day, as the others corrected themselves of their bows to him.

2d December.—Our dear and unfortunate friend spoke for two hours this morning, so well that several could not help openly admiring him. M. Renard, among the rest, said, "This man is incomparable; he never spoke so well in Parliament,—he never was more collected." It was again on the subject of the £24,000. . . . God grant that my last letter may tell you that which I ardently desire. Farewell, dear sir. Ask our solitary [Arnauld] to pray to God for our poor friend.

Meanwhile the Queen Mother is dying, and the trial is postponed. Madame de Sevigne breaks off her account of Fouquet, and describes the administration of the viaticum:

It was the most magnificent and the saddest thing in the world to see the King and all the Court with tapers, and a thousand torches, going to fetch and to carry back the holy sacrament. It was received with an infinity of lights. The Queen made an effort to raise herself, and took it with a devotion which melted all the bystanders to tears. It was not without difficulty that she had been brought to this: only the King could make her hear reason; to every one else she said she would communicate, but not for death.

Madame de Sevigne returns to her prisoner:

9th December.—I assure you these days are very long, and uncertainty is an overwhelming thing. . . . In the depths of my heart I have a little shred of hope,—I know not whence it comes or whither it goes: it is not enough to let me sleep in peace. I was speaking yesterday to Madame du Plessis of all this business. I can only meet with those with whom I can speak of it, and who are with me in feeling. She hopes as I do, without knowing the reason why.

17th December.—You are weary, my poor friend; we also are weary. I was sorry to have told you that judg-

ment was to be given on Tuesday, for, not hearing any news, you must have imagined all was lost, notwithstanding which, we still retain all our hopes. Every one is interested in this great affair—speaking of little else, reasoning, drawing conclusions; people count chances on their fingers, melt with pity, with apprehension, hoping, hating, admiring; some of us are sad, some of us are overwhelmed. In short, my dear sir, the state in which we live is an extraordinary one, but the resignation and courage of our dear sufferer are almost more than human.

Saturday.—Thank God, sir, and praise Him, our poor friend is safe. Thirteen votes were on M. d'Ormesson's side, and nine on that of St. Hilaire. I am so happy,—I am beside myself.

On the following Sunday she writes again:

I was dying for fear another than I should have given you the pleasure of hearing the good news. My courier does not seem to have hurried, although he told me when he started that he should not rest before reaching Livry. However, he assures me he was first to reach you. How comforting this news must have been to you! What inconceivable pleasure do the moments bring, in which our hearts and minds are relieved from such terrible suffering!

It will be long before I recover from the happiness I felt all yesterday. In truth, it was too complete,—I could hardly contain myself.

2. *Mlle. d'Orleans.* At the time in which Madame de Sevigne wrote, birth and position meant everything. The following description of a disappointed princess is particularly interesting:

PARIS, *Monday, December 15, 1670.*

I am going to tell you of the most astonishing thing,—the most surprising—the most marvelous—the most miraculous—the most triumphant—the most bewilder-

ing, unheard-of—the most singular, extraordinary, unbelievable, unforeseen event; the greatest, the smallest, the rarest, the commonest, the most vibrating, until this day the most secret; the most brilliant and enviable: in short, a thing of which one finds but one example in past ages,—a thing which we in Paris cannot believe; how, then, will you credit it at Lyons? . . . a thing which may happen on Sunday, and which perhaps, on Monday, will not have been done. I cannot make up my mind to tell you,—try to find it out for yourself. I give you three chances. Do you give it up? Well, then, I must tell you: M. de Lauzun is to be married at the Louvre on Sunday—guess to whom. I give you four, I give you ten, I give you a hundred to one that you do not guess. I hear Madame de Coulanges saying, "Here is a pretty mystification! It is Madame de la Vallière." No, madame; you are wrong. "Then, I suppose it is Mademoiselle de Retz." Nothing of the sort, you country lady. "Oh, indeed! do you think us so very dense? It must be Mademoiselle Colbert." Still less. "Then, surely Mademoiselle de Créqui." You are quite out of it. I see I shall have to tell you at last. He is to be married on Sunday, at the Louvre, with the sanction of the King, to Mademoiselle—Mademoiselle de—Mademoiselle—Guess again. He marries Mademoiselle,—on my word, my sacred word,—Mademoiselle—the great Mademoiselle—Mademoiselle, the daughter of the late Monsieur—the granddaughter of Henry IV—Mademoiselle d'Eu! Mademoiselle de Dombes! Mademoiselle de Montpensier! Mademoiselle d'Orléans! Mademoiselle, first cousin to the King! Mademoiselle destined for a throne!

When the King retracted his permission, the poor Princess woke from her dream, nearly broke her heart, and was faithful to her lover for many years. Madame de Sevigne, who began her description by laughing, closes in sympathy:

December 19, 1670.

That which is described as dropping from the clouds is what happened yesterday at the Tuileries; but I must go farther back than yesterday. You are still in all the joyful transports and raptures of the Princess and her happy lover. On Monday the thing was declared, as I told you. All Tuesday went by in talk, in wonder, in compliments. On Wednesday Mademoiselle made a formal donation to M. de Lauzun, in order that he should have the necessary titles, names, and adornments with which to figure in the marriage contract, which was drawn up that same day. She gave him (just to begin with) four duchies: the county of Eu, which is the first peerage in France, and which confers the first rank; the Duchy of Montpensier, of which he bore the name all day; the Duchy of St. Fargeau; the Duchy of Chatellerault—all of which are computed at twenty-two millions. Thursday morning—that is to say, yesterday—Mademoiselle hoped that the King would have signed the contract, as he had promised to do; but about seven o'clock in the evening, the Queen, Monsieur, and several *barbons* persuaded his Majesty that this affair was doing harm to his reputation; so that, having sent for Mademoiselle and M. de Lauzun, the King declared to them, in the presence of Monsieur le Prince, that he positively forbade their thinking any more of this marriage. M. de Lauzun received this order with all the respect, the submission—all the courage and the despair—which so great a catastrophe deserved. As for Mademoiselle, following her humor, she burst into tears, into cries, with violent distress and excessive complainings: all day she has kept her bed, and would take nothing but broth. . . . What a subject for romance or for tragedy! above all, what a fine subject for us to discuss, and to speak of, without ceasing! That is what we all do, day and night, evening and morning, unendingly, unceasingly, and we hope that you will do the same. . . . .

She called me to her, embraced me, bathed me in her tears. She said, "Alas! do you remember all that you

said to me yesterday? Ah, cruel prudence! Ah, prudence! prudence!'' She made *me* weep, so bitterly did she weep herself. I have returned to see her twice: she is in great affliction, and has treated me all along as a person who would sympathize with her sufferings. Nor has she been mistaken. I have felt on this occasion what people rarely feel for persons of so exalted a rank. This is between us two and Madame de Coulanges; for, as you may imagine, such a confidence would be ridiculous with others. Adieu.

3. *An Anecdote of the King.* The following episode explains itself:

I must tell you a little story which will amuse you. It is quite a true one. The King has lately been dabbling in verses. Messieurs de St. Aignan and Dangeau are giving him lessons in the art. He made a little madrigal the other day, with which he himself was not over-delighted. One morning he said to the Maréchal de Grammont, ''Monsieur le Maréchal, I beg of you to look at this little madrigal, and tell me if you ever read anything so pointless: since it has been known that I have had a taste for verses, I am overwhelmed with them.'' The Maréchal, after reading the verses, said to the King, ''Sire, your Majesty is a divinely inspired critic. It is perfectly undeniable that this is the most stupid and ridiculous madrigal I ever read.'' The King laughed, and said, ''Don't you think that the person who wrote it must be very fatuous?'' ''Sire, there is no other word by which to describe him.'' ''Well,'' said the King, ''I am delighted at your speaking so openly: it is I who wrote it.'' ''Ah, Sire, what treason!—let your Majesty give it me back; I read it hurriedly.'' '' No, Monsieur le Maréchal; first feelings are always the best.'' The King laughed heartily at this absurdity, and every one thinks it is the most cruel little joke to play upon an old courtier. For my part, I, who always love to make reflections, wish the King would do so too, and judge from

this how little likely he is ever to know the truth on any subject.

4. *Vatel.* In 1671 Louis accepted an invitation from the Duc d'Enghien to Chantilly, where the overseer and chief cook, Vatel, was to provide the food with the greatest care and magnificence. The relationship of a king to his subjects is well depicted in the fall of the faithful cook:

This is not a letter, but an account which Moreuil has just given me of what happened at Chantilly concerning Vatel. I wrote to you on Friday that he had stabbed himself: this is the story in detail:—The King arrived on Thursday evening. The hunt, the lanterns, the moonlight, the promenading, the collation in a garden of jonquils—all was everything that could be desired. Supper came; the joint failed at one or two tables on account of some unexpected diners. This upset Vatel. He said several times, "My honor is lost; this is a disgrace that I cannot endure." He said to Gourville, "My head fails me; I have not slept for twelve nights. Help me to give my orders." Gourville consoled him as best he could. The joint which had failed, not at the King's table but at the 25th table, haunted his mind. Gourville told Monsieur le Prince. Monsieur le Prince went up to him in his room and said, "Vatel, all is well; there never was anything so beautiful as the King's supper." He answered, "Monseigneur, your goodness overwhelms me. I know the joint failed at two tables." "Nothing of the sort," said Monsieur le Prince; "do not disturb yourself, —all is well." Midnight comes: the fireworks do not succeed; a cloud overspread them; they cost sixteen thousand francs. At four o'clock in the morning Vatel wanders about all over the place: everything is asleep. He meets a small purveyor with two loads of fish. He asks him, "Is this all?" "Yes, sir." The man did not know that Vatel had sent to all the seaport towns in

France. They wait some time; the other purveyors do not arrive. He grows excited; he thinks that no more fish will arrive. He finds Gourville, and says to him, "Sir, I shall not be able to survive this disgrace. My honor and reputation are at stake." Gourville only laughed at him. Then Vatel goes up to his own room, puts his sword against the door, and runs it through his heart—it was the third thrust, for he gave himself two wounds which were not mortal. He falls down quite dead. Meanwhile the fish is coming in from every side: people are seeking for Vatel to distribute it; they reach his room, they clamor, they burst open the door, they find him lying bathed in his blood. Monsieur le Prince is hurriedly summoned; he is in utter despair. Monsieur le Duc burst into tears; it was upon Vatel that his whole journey to Burgundy depended. Monsieur le Prince told the King, very sadly, "It was said to be the excess of his own code of honor." They praised him; they praised and they blamed his courage. The King said that for five years he had delayed his coming, because he knew the extreme trouble his visit would cause. . . . But it was too late for poor Vatel. Gourville, however, tried to repair the loss of Vatel, and the loss was repaired. The dinner was excellent; so was the luncheon. They supped, they walked, there were games, there was hunting, the scent of jonquils was everywhere; it was an enchanted scene.

5. *The Lazy Valet.* One of the most admired letters is that in which the writer tells of her experience with her lazy valet when she was preparing to do honor to the Duchesse de Chaulnes:

This word is over and above my fortnightly letter, my dear cousin, to inform you that you will soon have the honor of receiving Picard; and as he is the brother of Madame de Coulanges' valet, I am glad to let you know what my measures concerning him have been. You know

that Madame de Chaulnes is at Vitré: she is there awaiting her husband, the Duke, who arrives in ten or twelve days for the opening of the Brittany Chambers. You think that I am wandering: she is there awaiting her husband and all the Chambers, and, meanwhile, she is at Vitré all alone, dying of dullness. You cannot understand how this will ever lead to Picard. She is there dying of dullness. I am her only consolation, and you can well believe with what a high hand I carry it over Mademoiselle de Kerbone and De Kerqueoison. All this is very roundabout, but nevertheless we shall soon reach the point. As I am her only consolation, after having paid her a visit, she must come to me, and I want her to find my lawns neat and my alleys neat—those great alleys which you love. But still you don't understand where this is leading. Here is another little circumstance relating to it. You know this is haymaking time: I had no laborers, so I am obliged to send to that meadow which the poets have praised, to fetch all those working there to come and clean up here (you still see no point), and in their place I send all my people to *faner*. Do you know what to *faner* means? I must explain: to *faner* is the prettiest thing in the world. It is to turn hay over and over whilst gamboling in a meadow; if one can do this much, one can *faner*.

All my people went off gayly: Picard alone came to tell me he wouldn't go,—that he hadn't entered my service for this,—that it was not his business, and that he preferred going back to Paris. Upon my word my wrath rose. I reflected that this was the hundreth time he had offended me,—that he had no heart, nor feeling; in a word, the measure was overflowing. I took him at his word, and in spite of all that was said for him, I remained as firm as a rock, and he is gone. It is true justice to treat people according to their services, good or bad. If you see him again, don't receive him, don't protect him, don't blame me; and remember that he is the fellow in all the world who least likes haymaking, and is the most unworthy of being well treated. This is

the story in a few words. For my part, I like narratives in which one is only told what is necessary without any straying either to the right or to the left, or going back to the beginning of things. In short, to speak without any vanity, I think you have here a model of a pleasant narrative.

6. *Madame de Longueville's Despair.* When the Duc de La Rochefoucauld and Madame de Longueville learned of the death of the young De Longueville, the reputed son of the Duke; the wound of the Prince de Marsillac, his heir; and the death of Chevalier de Marsillac, Madame de Sevigne was present and thus affectingly describes the despair of the mother:

You have never seen Paris in its present state: everybody is weeping or expecting to weep. One keeps thinking of poor Madame de Nugent. Madame de Longueville, I hear, is quite heartbroken. I have not seen her, but this is what I have been told. Mademoiselle de Vertus had been back two days at Port Royal, where she almost always is. She was sent for with Monsieur Arnauld to break this terrible news. Mademoiselle de Vertus had only to show herself; this hurried return implied something dreadful as soon as she appeared. "Ah, Mademoiselle, how is my brother?" Her thought did not dare go any farther. "Madame, he is getting over his wound." "There has been a battle—and my son—?" She received no answer. "O my son! my dear child! Answer me, Mademoiselle, is he dead?" "Madame, I have no words with which to answer." "O my dear son! Did he die instantly? Not one single moment's grace? O my God, what a sacrifice!" And thereupon she fell on her bed, and went through everything which the most keen anguish could make her endure—convulsions, fainting fits, death-like silences, smothered cries, bitter tears, transports towards heaven, tender, piteous wailings. She sees certain people; she takes nourishment, because it is

the will of God she should do so; she can get no kind of rest; her health, already bad, is visibly getting worse. For my part, death is what I wish for her, not seeing how she is to live after such a loss.

7. *The Death of Turenne.* The death of Turenne was a great blow to France. It seemed impossible to replace him, and when the King appointed eight generals to carry on his work, the people of Paris spoke of them as "change for M. Turenne." Of the cannon fired by chance which killed Turenne, Madame de Sevigne says, "For myself, who see Providence in all things, I see that cannon loaded from all eternity." The following account of the great general's death is frequently quoted:

Let us speak a little of M. de Turenne. Do you not wonder that we should find ourselves happy to have recrossed the Rhine? and that which would have shocked us if he had been in the world, now seems a piece of prosperity, because we have him no longer. See what a difference comes from the loss of one man alone. Listen to what seems to me very fine. It strikes me as if reading Roman history. Saint Hilaire, lieutenant-general of artillery, made M. de Turenne, who had been always galloping until then, to stop short, in order that he might show him a battery. It was as if he said, "Sir, I pray you stop a little, for it is here that you are to be killed." Then the cannon-ball comes and carries off the arm with which Saint Hilaire is pointing out the battery, and strikes M. de Turenne at the same moment. The son of Saint Hilaire flings himself on to his father, and begins to cry and to weep. "Be silent, my child," the father says, and he shows him M. de Turenne stiff and dead. "That is what you have to weep for; that is what is irreparable." And without heeding himself he begins to bemoan this great loss.

8. *Suffering in the Provinces.* In 1675 she speaks with bitter feeling of the condition in her own unhappy province:

You say with good reason that dates do nothing to make delightful the letters of those we love. Good heavens! are public events so dear to us? Your health, your family, your least action, your sentiments, your bubbles from Lambesc—these are what really touch me; and I believe that you are in the same mind, so that I do not hesitate to speak to you of the Rochers, of Mademoiselle du Plessis, of my alleys, my woods, my affairs, of the Bienbon and of Copenhagen, when the occasion presents itself. Everything is important to me that comes from you, even to your strips of worsted-work. I am glad to know everything. If you want any more needles to work with, I have some admirable ones. Yesterday I did infinite needlework; it was as dull as my company. I only work when they all come in. As soon as I am alone I walk, I read, I write, and a Du Plessis no more hinders me than does Marie. Heaven gives me the grace not to hear a word she says. . . .

Then she continues:

Would you have news of Rennes? There are now five thousand troops there, for others have come from Nantes. They have laid a tax of a hundred thousand crowns upon the inhabitants, and if this sum is not produced in four-and-twenty hours, it is to be doubled and exacted by the soldiers. They have hunted out and banished the inhabitants of one whole great street, and forbidden, upon pain of death, that any of these are to be sheltered or taken in, so that all these miserable people were to be seen; women lying-in, old men, children wandering in tears at the gates of the town, not knowing where to go, nor how to find food, nor where to sleep. The day before yesterday a pedlar was broken on the wheel: he had begun the dance and the pillage of the stamps. He was quartered after his death, and his four parts exposed at the four

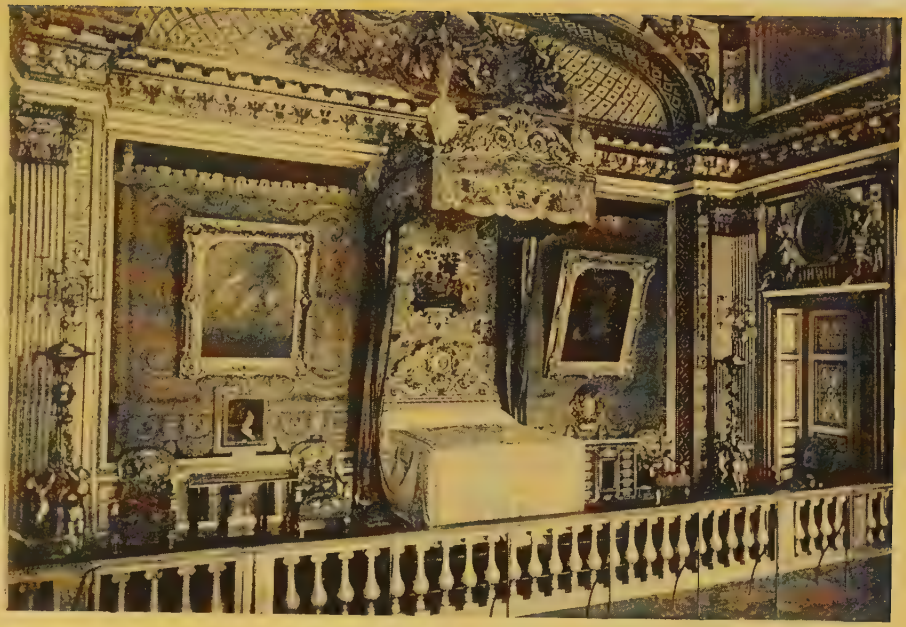
corners of the town. He, dying, said that the Commissioners of Stamps had given him twenty-five crowns to begin the sedition, and nothing else would he say. Sixty burghers have been taken, and to-morrow they are to begin the hangings. This province is a fine example for the others—above all, to teach respect for governors and governesses, and not to say rude things to them, and not to throw stones into their gardens.

. . . . . .

You speak very pleasantly of our miseries. We are no longer so much broken on the wheel as we were. One of us a-week only, to keep justice in hand. It is true that mere hanging now seems a refreshing process. I have quite a new idea of justice since I am in this country. Your galley-slaves seem to me a society of honest folks, who have retired from the world to lead a peaceful existence.

9. *Port Royal.* Madame de Sevigne writes as follows of the solitaries at Port Royal:

This Port Royal is a Thebaïde, a Paradise, a desert, where the devotion of Christendom is collected together, and holiness spreads for a league in circumference. There are five or six Solitaries who live like the penitents of St. John Climaques. The nuns are angels upon earth. Mademoiselle de Vertus is ending her life there with extreme resignation and inconceivable suffering. She will not be alive in another month. Everything that serves to their necessities—the carters, the shepherds, the workmen—all is holy, all is modest. I confess to you that I was delighted to see this solitude, of which I have heard so much. It is a frightful valley, quite suitable to work out one's salvation in. I slept at Mesnil on my way back, and we returned here after again embracing M. d'Andilly. I think I shall dine to-morrow with M. de Pomponne, and it will not be without speaking of his father and of my daughter.



BED OF LOUIS XIV
IN THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

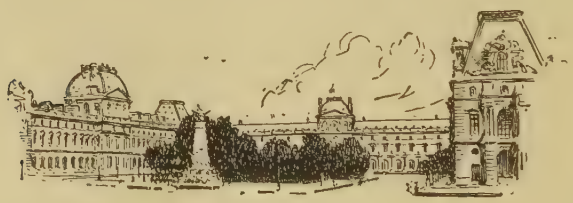
10. *A Court Incident.* The following amusing account of an incident in a great court ceremony at Versailles has been deservedly popular:

He told me that they began on the Friday: the first took their oaths with court dresses and with collars on. Two marshals of France stayed over for Saturday. Marshal de Bellefonds was perfectly ridiculous, partly from modesty and partly from indifference. He had neglected to put bows at the knees of his page's costume, so that it had an air of veritable bareness. The whole troop were magnificent, M. de la Trousse among the best; but there was a tangle in his wig which obliged him to push what ought to have been at the side far away behind, so that his cheek was all uncovered. He was always pulling at that which embarrassed him, and which would not come, and this caused him no little vexation. But along the same line M. de Montchevreuil and M. de Villars entangled themselves one to the other so furiously—the swords, the ribbons, the laces, the tinsel hangings were all mixed, confused, jumbled; all the little crooked atoms so perfectly interlaced that no human hand could separate them; the more people tried the more they seemed to entangle them, like the rings in Roger's coat of mail. At last the whole ceremony, all their salutations, the whole performance coming to a standstill, it was necessary to separate the two by main force, and the stronger carried the day. But that which entirely disconcerted the gravity of the ceremony was good M. d' Hocquincourt's negligence, who is so accustomed to be dressed like the Provençals, or even Bretons, that his page's breeches being less commodious than those which he is accustomed to wear, his shirt would not remain in place, however much he wished it to do so. Knowing his condition, he tried constantly to put order to it, but always in vain, so that Madame la Dauphine could no longer contain her burst of laughter. It was deplorable; the majesty of the King itself was nearly shaken, and

never in the history of the Order was such an adventure known.

11. *A Pastoral.* We can do no better in closing our extracts than to give the following picture, which was drawn during the latter years of Madame de Sévigné's life, while her own health was still good, while her children were no longer children, and her granddaughter was of marriageable age:

Our partridges are all fed on thyme, on sweet marjoram, and upon all the perfumes of our *sachets:* there is nothing to choose between them. I may say as much for our fat quails, whose thighs must part from their bodies at the first summons (they never fail to do it); and the turtle-doves are all quite perfect too. As for the melons, the figs and the muscat grapes, they are marvels. If by some strange whim we were to try and find a bad melon, we should be obliged to send to Paris for it: there are none to be found here. The figs are white and sweet; the muscats are like drops of amber, only delectable; and they would soon go to your head if you ate without measure, because it is as if you were drinking little sips of the most exquisite wine at Saint Laurent. My dear cousin, what a life! You know it under less sunny aspects. It does not in any way recall that of La Trappe. See what details I have gone into. It is chance which guides our pens!



THE LOUVRE, PARIS

CHAPTER XIII

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV (CONTINUED)
TWO POETS

BOILEAU. Up to the middle of the seventeenth century criticism as an art had made little progress in France, and Nicolas Boileau, who, as was then the custom, added to his own another name and was usually called Despreaux, laid down the rules for the new field in literature. His father, who was a law clerk, anxious for the success of his son, had him educated first in theology and then in law in the Sorbonne. The falseness and trickery then prevalent in the law disgusted the young Boileau, and he gave up his profession and lived on the moderate income which his father had left him at his death in 1657. The remainder of Boileau's life was devoted to the study of lit-

erature, but at first he showed little sign of the success of later years.

The life of the poet was uneventful and commonplace, lived almost exclusively in Paris, for which he had a great attachment, and under about the same conditions as the ordinary bourgeois then lived. Boileau was never at home with the aristocracy, for he was essentially a plebeian, and although at the request of the King he was finally admitted to the Academy he never accommodated himself to the manners of the upper classes. While he had his friends among the aristocracy, he enjoyed better the jovial life of the cafes and the revels with lively Bohemians, among whom was Ninon de L'Enclos, the witty beauty who had among her lovers a succession of famous men, including La Rochefoucauld and Condé, and who counted among her intimate friends Madame de Maintenon and Madame de La Fayette. Boileau never married, and died, famous for his satire and criticism, at the age of seventy-five.

To the English reader the work of Boileau is particularly interesting because of the influence he exerted over Pope and through him over the school of English writers who carried their love of form to such extremes. There is, in fact, quite a resemblance between the work of the French critic and that of Pope, both in meter and in the number of apt and quotable sentences which besprinkle his poetry. Perhaps, we are inclined even now, however, to

rank him above his deserts, and should find no cause for regret in the fact that his writings are less popular than formerly, as so many better compositions in the same lines are now in existence.

In his own day, however, he accomplished a great deal, and it is owing to his criticism and his stand for accuracy and perfection in writing that Moliere, Racine and others perfected their style. His writings included among other things twelve satires, which were of the destructive style of criticism; his didactic poem, *The Art of Poesy,* which was constructive and helpful to young writers; and *The Heroes of Romance,* a satirical mock epic, which gave the death blow to the long romantic novels which were still somewhat popular in the public mind. Some of his satire was pitilessly severe, and the extremely personal nature of it earned him many enemies, for he spared no one and was willing to expose the lives and characters of any whom he knew. Preciosity was always the subject of his contempt, and his biting sarcasm did not a little to curb the extravagance of that fad and ultimately to bring it into disrepute.

To the technique of poetry Boileau attached high importance and laid down rules which separated by strict lines the different species, such as the idyl, elegy, ode, sonnet, epigram, etc., to the end of the long list. Perhaps only one of the numerous species failed to receive mention from him, and that was the fable,

though why he should have omitted this is difficult to see, for he could not have been unaware of the excellence of La Fontaine's work.

II. Extracts from Boileau-Despreaux.

1. As an example of the nicety with which he made his poetic definitions, examine the following description of the epigram, from *The Art of Poetry:*

The Epigram, with little art composed,
Is one good sentence in a distich closed.
These points, that by Italians first were prized,
Our ancient authors knew not, or despised;
The vulgar, dazzled with their glaring light,
To their false pleasures quickly they invite;
But public favor so increased their pride,
They overwhelmed Parnassus with their tide.

2. The elegy is thus defined:

The Elegy, that loves a mournful style,
With unbound hair weeps at a funeral pile;
It paints the lover's torments and delights,
A mistress flatters, threatens, and invites;
But well these raptures if you'll make us see,
You must know love as well as poetry.

I hate those lukewarm authors, whose forced fire
In a cold style describes a hot desire;
That sigh by rule, and raging in cold blood,
Their sluggish muse whip to an amorous mood.
Their transports feigned appear but flat and vain;
They always sigh, and always hug their chain,
Adore their prisons and their sufferings bless,
Make sense and reason quarrel as they please.
'Twas not of old in this affected tone
That smooth Tibullus made his amorous moan;
Nor Ovid, when, instructed from above,
By nature's rule he taught the art of love.
The heart in elegies forms the discourse.

3. From the *Satires* comes the following tribute to Moliere:

Unequaled genius, whose warm fancy knows
No rhyming labor, no poetic throes;
To whom Apollo has unlocked his store;
Whose coin is struck from pure Parnassian ore;
Thou, dextrous master, teach thy skill to me,
And tell me, Moliere, how to rhyme like thee!

. . . . . .

To you, who know how justly I complain,
To you I turn for medicine to my pain!
Grant me your talent, and impart your store,
Or teach me, Moliere, how to rhyme no more.

4. The following lines to Madame Scudery are from the same source:

Hail, happy Scudery! whose prolific brain
Brings forth a monthly volume without pain;
What though thy works, offending every rule,
Proclaim their author an insipid fool;
Still have they found, whate'er the critic says,
Traders to buy and emptier fools to praise.

5. The following are brief extracts showing the pithy nature of his writings and the character of their quotable passages:

In our scribbling times
No fool can lack a fool to praise his rhymes;
The flattest work has here within the court
Met with some zealous ass for its support;
And in all times a forward scribbling fop
Has found some greater fool to cry him up.

. . . . . .

More pleased we are to see a river lead
His gentle streams along a flowery mead,
Than from high banks to hear loud torrents roar,
With foamy waters, on a muddy shore.

. . . . . .

Keep to your subject close in all you say,
Nor for a sounding sentence ever stray.

. . . . . .

What we conceive with ease we can express;
Words to the notions flow with readiness.

III. Fables. Elsewhere we have seen that fables were a prominent part of various literatures, India, Persia, Greece and Rome all having contributed their share. Moreover, the aptness of the fable to human life has made it in a sense universal, so that writers of one age and country have drawn liberally for subjects upon the writers of others. Bidpai, Aesop, Phaedrus and others have contributed their share to the literature of the world, and the greatest fable writer of modern times, La Fontaine, drew freely from them.

During the Middle Ages few fables were written, but with the revival of literature interest in them increased, and in France those that had been brought home from the Crusades proved a stimulus to several writers. Marie de France, whose poetry has already been mentioned, versified a hundred of the fables of Aesop under the title *Little Aesop*. From this time on France took a lead in the creation of them, not only because of a fondness for them, but also because the language itself seemed to have some peculiar fitness to the decidedly pithy style of the fable. A hundred years before La Fontaine numerous writers had put beautiful fables into verse, and it is supposed that La Fontaine read and profited by these,

although apparently they had been forgotten in a fuller and richer development, especially in prose. From earliest times the little tales were expressed in the simplest, most concise and least ornamental style, and it was considered almost heretical to tell them in florid verse. La Fontaine, however, changed this theory, as we shall see.

IV. La Fontaine. Jean de La Fontaine was a backward boy who was intended by his father for the priesthood, and, in fact, began study for the ecclesiastical profession, although from the start he was manifestly unfitted for it. He was born in 1621, but it was more than twenty years later that he showed the least interest in poetry, and his genius did not reach its maturity until he was more than fifty years old.

When Jean was twenty-six, but with the maturity of a sixteen-year-old lad only, his father secured for him a girl bride, but, as might be expected, the marriage was in many respects unhappy. Jean himself, though he lived with his wife for many years and had a son by her, never knew what faithfulness meant, but made his friend any woman who attracted his attention. For a long time he was the great favorite of the successive mistresses of Louis XIV, and to please them wrote much of the poetry which, as it deserves, has been completely forgotten. This part of his life, in which he pandered to all which was worst in the court of France, became the cause of bitter regret to him in later years, and he

used every opportunity to try to obliterate the evil he had done.

It is said that his first real interest in poetry came from reading Malherbe, and that after his enthusiasm had once been excited he devoted himself entirely to a study of the poets and acquired a deep and appreciative knowledge of all that was great in classic and French literature. His first works were not of great moment and have ceased to attract public attention. His *Contes,* begun at the request of Madame de Bouillon and continued under the encouragement of other women of her class, were modeled on the *Decameron, Heptameron* and *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles,* and the free and open nature of La Fontaine urged him to write even worse tales than his models, a habit which subjected him to much criticism, for he never concealed anything and shocked all his friends by his conversation as well as his actions.

However, no man ever had more devoted friends than La Fontaine, and with all his faults he was a most charming and lovable fellow. He was the *bon-homme* (good-natured man) of French literature and more frequently alluded to by that title than by his own name. He was good by nature, filled with a kindly spirit for everybody, and he cherished no ill will. Moliere, Boileau and Racine were his most intimate friends—Moliere already famous, and the others well on their way to fame. The four were very unlike: Boileau, honest, frank, but blunt and blustering; Ra-

cine, quietly gay, but mischievous and sarcastic; Moliere, thoughtful, melancholy, considerate of every one; La Fontaine, absent-minded, jovial, witty and simple. In one of his prefaces La Fontaine thus describes the meetings of these friends:

> Four friends, whose acquaintance had begun at the foot of Parnassus, held a sort of society, which I should call an Academy, if their number had been sufficiently great, and if they had had as much regard for the Muses as for pleasure. The first thing which they did was to banish from among them all rules of conversation, and everything which savors of the academic conference. When they met, and had sufficiently discussed their amusements, if chance threw them upon any point of science or belles-lettres, they profited by the occasion; it was, however, without dwelling too long on the same subject, flitting from one thing to another like the bees that meet divers sorts of flowers on their way. Neither envy, malice, nor cabal had any voice among them. They adored the works of the ancients, never refused due praise to those of the moderns, spoke modestly of their own, and gave each other sincere counsel, when any one of them—which rarely happened—fell into the malady of the age, and published a book.

By several of his works La Fontaine attracted the attention of Fouquet and was taken by the latter into his own household, where the poet was comfortably provided for and lived at ease. With the fall of the great Minister, however, La Fontaine was left for a time without a patron, but not without friends, any of whom seemed willing to take him to his home. His inability to provide for himself made friends a necessity, and when his affairs began

to be particularly troublesome, the celebrated Madame de la Sabliere invited him to make her house his home, and there he remained for nearly twenty years. She was one of the best educated women in France, and her husband, secretary to the King, was eventually wealthy and very willing to patronize a genius like La Fontaine, whose position in the family may be inferred from a remark made by Madame Sabliere, one time when she was closing her house: "I have sent away all my domestics; I have kept only my dog, my cat, and La Fontaine." La Fontaine fully appreciated everything she did for him, submitted all his work to her, and paid many a touching tribute to her kindness. On the other hand, she reposed perfect confidence in his integrity, remarking once, "La Fontaine never lies in prose."

In 1693 the death of Madame de la Sabliere left La Fontaine again without a home, and he was then seventy-two years of age. Other friends, however, provided for him and he devoted himself to personal religion and was received into the Roman Catholic Church. His old friends Racine and Maucroix cheered him and sustained him in his religious life, and when death overtook him in 1695 he was giving his poetical powers to the hymns of the Church. A little before his death he wrote to De Maucroix as follows:

> I assure you that the best of your friends cannot count upon more than fifteen days of life. For these two

months I have not gone abroad, except occasionally to attend the Academy, for a little amusement. Yesterday, as I was returning from it, in the middle of the Rue du Chantre, I was taken with such a faintness that I really thought myself dying. Oh, my friend, to die is nothing: but think you how I am going to appear before God! You know how I have lived. Before you receive this billet, the gates of eternity will perhaps have been opened upon me!

When Fenelon, tutor to Louis XIV's grandson, heard of La Fontaine's death, he wrote a eulogy in Latin and gave it to his royal pupil for translation. In it occurred these words: "La Fontaine is no more! He is no more! and with him have gone the playful jokes, the merry laugh, the artless graces and the sweet Muses."

La Fontaine was not admitted to the French Academy until late, because the King objected to the obscenity of his writings, but finally, upon promising amendment, Louis XIV permitted him to join (1684). The attitude of the world toward La Fontaine was happily expressed by his nurse. "He is so simple," she said, "that God will not have courage to damn him."

V. The Fables of La Fontaine. All that is best of La Fontaine's work is found in his fables, where the play of his faculties is complete and delightful. Large and sustained creation on big subjects was quite impossible to him, but within the narrow range of his favorite medium his genius found free expression. Although his subjects are not in the main

original, yet he gave an entirely new form to them and united with simple narration the elements of dramatic and lyric poetry. His appreciation of nature, his powers of observation as applied to human character and society, enabled him to create varied masterpieces from exceedingly simple topics.

The first six books were published first, and many of the separate fables had appeared before he made the collection, which included few of his own invention and confined itself more closely to the old style than did his later books. In this it was as though he had discovered that the most popular of his fables were those in which he allowed his imagination to play freely, and that taking advantage of this discovery, he wrote at greater length and diversified his subjects more generously. Finally, instead of writing a short apologue intended to point a moral, he produced little tales in which dialogue, description, satire and observation all have an interest of their own, while the moral appears merely incidental.

In none of the tales is his morality deep. He takes the world as he finds it, smiles at its vanities and in an amiable spirit of moderation and good sense gives his good-natured advice. Besides, he shows a wonderful power in humanizing the animal creation and great shrewdness in selecting picturesque and entertaining incidents; his use of words is regarded as most exact and happy; his verse is free, but adapted to the subject of which he is writing.

More than most writers, La Fontaine is considered typically French, and his fables have been as widely read as any production in French literature; in fact, there is not a school boy in all France who does not read the little tales.

VI. A FEW OF THE FABLES. 1. One of the most admired and one of the most original of La Fontaine's fables is *The Man and His Image,* which was addressed to the Duc de La Rochefoucauld. The description of the fop is no exaggeration, and it is said that even the canons of the Church wore mirrors on their shoes while officiating. The appended translations are the work of Elizur Wright, a graduate of Yale College:

A man, who had no rivals in the love
  Which to himself he bore,
Esteem'd his own dear beauty far above
  What earth had seen before.
More than contended in his error,
He lived the foe of every mirror.
Officious fate, resolved our lover
From such an illness should recover,
Presented always to his eyes
The mute advisers which the ladies prize;—
Mirrors in parlors, inns, and shops,—
Mirrors the pocket furniture of fops,—
Mirrors on every lady's zone,
From which his face reflected shone.
What could our dear Narcissus do?
From haunts of men he now withdrew,
On purpose that his precious shape
From every mirror might escape.
  But in his forest glen alone,

Apart from human trace,
A watercourse,
Of purest source,
While with unconscious gaze
He pierced its waveless face,
Reflected back his own.
Incensed with mingled rage and fright,
He seeks to shun the odious sight;
But yet that mirror sheet, so clear and still,
He cannot leave, do what he will.

Ere this, my story's drift you plainly see.
From such mistake there is no mortal free.
That obstinate self-lover
The human soul doth cover;
The mirrors follies are of others,
In which, as all are genuine brothers,
Each soul may see to life depicted
Itself with just such faults afflicted;
And by that charming placid brook,
Needless to say, I mean your Maxim Book.

2. La Fontaine's own favorite among his fables was *The Oak and the Reed,* though the public generally ranks more highly the one with which we follow this:

The oak one day address'd the reed:—
"To you ungenerous indeed
Has nature been, my humble friend,
With weakness aye obliged to bend.
The smallest bird that flits in air
Is quite too much for you to bear;
The slightest wind that wreathes the lake
Your ever-trembling head doth shake.
The while, my towering form
Dares with the mountain top
The solar blaze to stop,
And wrestle with the storm.
What seems to you the blast of death,

To me is but a zephyr's breath.
Beneath my branches had you grown,
That spread far round their friendly bower,
Less suffering would your life have known,
Defended from the tempest's power.
Unhappily you oftenest show
In open air your slender form,
Along the marshes wet and low,
That fringe the kingdom of the storm.
To you, declare I must,
Dame Nature seems unjust."
Then modestly replied the reed:
"Your pity, sir, is kind indeed,
But wholly needless for my sake.
The wildest wind that ever blew
Is safe to me compared with you.
I bend, indeed, but never break.
Thus far, I own, the hurricane
Has beat your sturdy back in vain;
But wait the end." Just at the word,
The tempest's hollow voice was heard.
The North sent forth her fiercest child,
Dark, jagged, pitiless, and wild.
The oak, erect, endured the blow;
The reed bow'd gracefully and low.
But, gathering up its strength once more,
In greater fury than before,
The savage blast
O'erthrew, at last,
That proud, old sky-encircled head,
Whose feet entwined the empire of the dead!

3. *"The Animal Sick of the Plague."* This, the first in the seventh book, is regarded by many writers as one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful, of all. While it is altogether original in treatment, its subject may be found in the fables of Bidpai:

The sorest ill that Heaven hath
Sent on this lower world in wrath,—
The plague (to call it by its name),
One single day of which
Would Pluto's ferryman enrich,—
Waged war on beasts, both wild and tame.
They died not all, but all were sick:
No hunting now, by force or trick,
To save what might so soon expire.
No food excited their desire;
Nor wolf nor fox now watch'd to slay
The innocent and tender prey.
The turtles fled;
So love and therefore joy were dead.
The lion council held, and said:
"My friends, I do believe
This awful scourge, for which we grieve,
Is for our sins a punishment
Most righteously by Heaven sent.
Let us our guiltiest beast resign,
A sacrifice to wrath divine.
Perhaps this offering, truly small,
May gain the life and health of all.
By history we find it noted
That lives have been just so devoted.
Then let us all turn eyes within,
And ferret out the hidden sin.
Himself let no one spare nor flatter,
But make clean conscience in the matter.
For me, my appetite has play'd the glutton
Too much and often upon mutton.
What harm had e'er my victims done?
I answer, truly, None.
Perhaps, sometimes, by hunger press'd,
I've eat the shepherd with the rest.
I yield myself, if need there be;
And yet I think, in equity,
Each should confess his sins with me;
For laws of right and justice cry,

The guiltiest alone should die."
"Sire," said the fox, "your majesty
Is humbler than a king should be,
And over-squeamish in the case.
What! eating stupid sheep a crime?
No, never, sire, at any time.
It rather was an act of grace,
A mark of honor to their race.
And as to shepherds, one may swear,
The fate your majesty describes,
Is recompense less full than fair
For such usurpers o'er our tribes."

Thus Renard glibly spoke,
And loud applause from flatterers broke.
Of neither tiger, boar, nor bear,
Did any keen inquirer dare
To ask for crimes of high degree;
The fighters, biters, scratchers, all
From every mortal sin were free;
The very dogs, both great and small,
Were saints, as far as dogs could be.

The ass, confessing in his turn,
Thus spoke in tones of deep concern:—
"I happen'd through a mead to pass;
The monks, its owners, were at mass;
Keen hunger, leisure, tender grass,
And add to these the devil too,
All tempted me the deed to do.
I browsed the bigness of my tongue;
Since truth must out, I own it wrong."

On this, a hue and cry arose,
As if the beasts were all his foes:
A wolf, haranguing lawyer-wise,
Denounced the ass for sacrifice—
The bald-pate, scabby, ragged lout,
By whom the plague had come, no doubt.

His fault was judged a hanging crime.
"What? eat another's grass? O shame!
The noose of rope and death sublime,"
For that offense, were all too tame!
And soon poor Grizzle felt the same.

Thus human courts acquit the strong,
And doom the weak, as therefore wrong.

4. *"The Lion in Love."* This clever fable, whose source may be found in Aesop, was addressed to Mlle. de Sevigne, afterwards Madame de Grignan, the adored daughter of the celebrated letter writer:

Sevigne, type of every grace
In female form and face,
In your regardlessness of men,
Can you show favor when
The sportive fable claims your ear,
And see, unmoved by fear,
A lion's haughty heart
Thrust through by Love's audacious dart?
Strange conqueror, Love! And happy he,
And strangely privileged and free,
Who only knows by story
Him and his feats of glory!
If on this subject you are wont
To think the simple truth too blunt,
The fabulous may less affront;
Which now, inspired with gratitude,
Yea, kindled into zeal most fervent,
Doth venture to intrude
Within your maiden solitude,
And kneel, your humble servant.—
In times when animals were speakers,
Among the quadrupedal seekers
Of our alliance
There came the lions.

And wherefore not? for then
They yielded not to men
In point of courage or of sense,
Nor were in looks without pretense.
A high-born lion, on his way
Across a meadow, met one day
A shepherdess, who charm'd him so,
That, as such matters ought to go,
He sought the maiden for his bride.
Her sire, it cannot be denied,
Had much preferr'd a son-in-law
Of less terrific mouth and paw.
It was not easy to decide—
The lion might the gift abuse—
'Twas not quite prudent to refuse.
And if refusal there should be,
Perhaps a marriage one would see,
Some morning, made clandestinely.
    For, over and above
The fact that she could bear
With none but males of martial air,
    The lady was in love
With him of shaggy hair.
Her sire, much wanting cover
To send away the lover,
Thus spoke:—"My daughter, sir,
Is delicate. I fear to her
    Your fond caressings
    Will prove rough blessings.
    To banish all alarm
    About such sort of harm,
Permit us to remove the cause,
By filing off your teeth and claws.
In such a case, your royal kiss
Will be to her a safer bliss,
    And to yourself a sweeter;
Since she will more respond
To those endearments fond
    With which you greet her."

The lion gave consent at once,
By love so great a dunce!
Without a tooth or claw now view him—
A fort with cannon spiked.
The dogs, let loose upon him, slew him,
All biting safely where they liked.

O, tyrant Love! when held by you,
We may to prudence bid adieu.

5. *"The Dairywoman and the Pot of Milk."* This and the following fable should be read together:

A pot of milk upon her cushion'd crown,
Good Peggy hasten'd to the market town;
Short clad and light, with speed she went,
Not fearing any accident;
Indeed, to be the nimbler tripper,
Her dress that day,
The truth to say,
Was simple petticoat and slipper.
And, thus bedight,
Good Peggy, light,—
Her gains already counted,—
Laid out the cash
At single dash,
Which to a hundred eggs amounted.
Three nests she made,
Which, by the aid
Of diligence and care were hatch'd.
"To raise the chicks,
I'll easy fix,"
Said she, "beside our cottage thatch'd.
The fox must get
More cunning yet,
Or leave enough to buy a pig.
With little care
And any fare,

He'll grow quite fat and big;
And then the price
Will be so nice,
For which the pork will sell!
'Twill go quite hard
But in our yard
I'll bring a cow and calf to dwell—
A calf to frisk among the flock!"
The thought made Peggy do the same;
And down at once the milk-pot came,
And perish'd with the shock.
Calf, cow, and pig, and chicks, adieu!
Your mistress' face is sad to view;
She gives a tear to fortune spilt;
Then with the downcast look of guilt
Home to her husband empty goes,
Somewhat in danger of his blows.

Who buildeth not, sometimes, in air
His cots, or seats, or castles fair?
From kings to dairywomen,—all,—
The wise, the foolish, great and small,—
Each thinks his waking dream the best.
Some flattering error fills the breast:
The world with all its wealth is ours,
Its honors, dames, and loveliest bowers.
Instinct with valor, when alone,
I hurl the monarch from his throne;
The people, glad to see him dead,
Elect me monarch in his stead,
And diadems rain on my head.
Some accident then calls me back,
And I'm no more than simple Jack.

6. *"The Curate and the Corpse."* Madame de Sevigne writes concerning this fable, which should be read with the one preceding: "M. Boufflers has killed a man since his death. The circumstance was this: they were carrying him

about a league from Boufflers to inter him; the corpse was on a bier in a coach; his own curate attended it; the coach overset, and the bier, falling upon the curate's neck, choked him. . . . Here is Fontaine's fable, too, on the adventure of M. de Boufflers' curate, who was killed in the coach by his dead patron. There was something very extraordinary in the affair itself; the fable is pretty:"

A dead man going slowly, sadly,
To occupy his last abode,
A curate by him, rather gladly,
Did holy service on the road.
Within a coach the dead was borne,
A robe around him duly worn,
Of which I wot he was not proud—
That ghostly garment call'd a shroud.
In summer's blaze and winter's blast,
That robe is changeless—'tis the last.
The curate, with his priestly dress on,
Recited all the church's prayers,
The psalm, the verse, response, and lesson,
In fullest style of such affairs.
Sir Corpse, we beg you, do not fear
A lack of such things on your bier;
They'll give abundance every way,
Provided only that you pay.
The Reverend John Cabbagepate
Watch'd o'er the corpse as if it were
A treasure needing guardian care;
And all the while, his looks elate,
This language seem'd to hold:
"The dead will pay so much in gold,
So much in lights of molten wax,
So much in other sorts of tax:"
With all he hoped to buy a cask of wine,
The best which thereabouts produced the vine.

A pretty niece, on whom he doted,
And eke his chambermaid, should be promoted,
By being newly petticoated.
The coach upset, and dash'd to pieces,
Cut short these thoughts of wine and nieces!
There lay poor John with broken head,
Beneath the coffin of the dead!
His rich parishioner in lead
Drew on the priest the doom
Of riding with him to the tomb!

The Pot of Milk, and fate
Of Curate Cabbagepate,
As emblems, do but give
The history of most that live.

7. *Death and the Dying* has been described as combining the genius of Pascal and Moliere:

Death never taketh by surprise
The well-prepared, to wit, the wise—
They knowing of themselves the time
To meditate the final change of clime.
That time, alas! embraces all
Which into hours and minutes we divide;
There is no part, however small,
That from this tribute one can hide.
The very moment, oft, which bids
The heirs of empire see the light
Is that which shuts their fringèd lids
In everlasting night.
Defend yourself by rank and wealth,
Plead beauty, virtue, youth, and health,—
Unblushing Death will ravish all;
The world itself shall pass beneath his pall.
No truth is better known; but, truth to say,
No truth is oftener thrown away.

A man, well in his second century,
Complain'd that Death had call'd him suddenly;

Had left no time his plans to fill,
To balance books, or make his will.
"O Death," said he, "d'ye call it fair,
Without a warning to prepare,
To take a man on lifted leg?
O, wait a little while, I beg.
My wife cannot be left alone;
I must set out my nephew's son,
And let me build my house a wing,
Before you strike, O cruel king!"
"Old man," said Death, "one thing is sure,—
My visit here's not premature.
Hast thou not lived a century!
Darest thou engage to find for me?
In Paris' walls two older men
Has France, among her millions ten?
Thou say'st I should have sent thee word
Thy lamp to trim, thy loins to gird,
And then my coming had been meet—
Thy will engross'd,
Thy house complete!
Did not thy feelings notify?
Did not they tell thee thou must die?
Thy taste and hearing are no more;
Thy sight itself is gone before;
For thee the sun superfluous shines,
And all the wealth of Indian mines;
Thy mates I've shown thee dead or dying.
What's this, indeed, but notifying?
Come on, old man, without reply;
For to the great and common weal
It doth but little signify
Whether thy will shall ever feel
The impress of thy hand and seal."

And Death had reason,—ghastly sage!
For surely man, at such an age,
Should part from life as from a feast,
Returning decent thanks, at least,

To Him who spread the various cheer,
And unrepining take his bier;
For shun it long no creature can.
Repinest thou, gray-headed man?
See younger mortals rushing by
To meet their death without a sigh—
Death full of triumph and of fame,
But in its terrors still the same.—
But, ah! my words are thrown away!
Those most like Death most dread his sway.

8. To one of the fables of Bidpai, La Fontaine was indebted for the subject of *The Wolf and the Hunter:*

Thou lust of gain,—foul fiend, whose evil eyes
Regard as nought the blessings of the skies,
Must I for ever battle thee in vain?
How long demandest thou to gain
The meaning of my lessons plain?
Will constant getting never cloy?
Will man ne'er slacken to enjoy?
Haste, friend; thou hast not long to live:
Let me the precious word repeat,
And listen to it, I entreat;
A richer lesson none can give—
The sovereign antidote for sorrow—
ENJOY!—"I will."—But when?—"To-morrow.—"
Ah! death may take you on the way,
Why not enjoy, I ask, to-day?
Lest envious fate your hopes ingulf,
As once it served the hunter and the wolf.

The former, with his fatal bow,
A noble deer had laid full low:
A fawn approach'd, and quickly lay
Companion of the dead,
For side by side they bled.
Could one have wished a richer prey?

Such luck had been enough to sate
A hunter wise and moderate.
Meantime a boar, as big as e'er was taken,
Our archer tempted, proud, and fond of bacon.
Another candidate for Styx,
Struck by his arrow, foams and kicks.
But strangely do the shears of Fate
To cut his cable hesitate.
Alive, yet dying, there he lies,
A glorious and a dangerous prize.
And was not this enough? Not quite,
To fill a conqueror's appetite;
For, ere the boar was dead, he spied
A partridge by a furrow's side—
A trifle to his other game.
Once more his bow he drew;
The desperate boar upon him came,
And in his dying vengeance slew:
The partridge thank'd him as she flew.

Thus much is to the covetous address'd;
The miserly shall have the rest.

A wolf, in passing, saw that woeful sight.
"O Fortune," cried the savage, with delight,
"A fane to thee I'll build outright!
Four carcasses! how rich! But spare—
I'll make them last—such luck is rare"
(The miser's everlasting plea).
"They'll last a month, for—let me see—
One, two, three, four—the weeks are four,
If I can count—and some days more.
Well, two days hence
And I'll commence.
Meantime, the string upon this bow
I'll stint myself to eat;
For by its mutton-smell I know
'Tis made of entrails sweet."
His entrails rued the fatal weapon,

Which, while he heedlessly did step on,
The arrow pierced his bowels deep,
And laid him lifeless on the heap.

Hark, stingy souls! insatiate leeches!
Our text this solemn duty teaches,—
Enjoy the present; do not wait
To share the wolf's or hunter's fate.

9. *The Two Doves* is universally considered one of the best of the fables, and it has been said to show a heart interest like that of Shakespeare:

Two doves once cherish'd for each other
The love that brother hath for brother.
But one, of scenes domestic tiring,
To see the foreign world aspiring,
Was fool enough to undertake
A journey long, o'er land and lake.
"What plan is this?" the other cried;
"Wouldst quit so soon thy brother's side?
This absence is the worst of ills;
Thy heart may bear, but me it kills.
Pray, let the dangers, toil, and care,
Of which all travelers tell,
Your courage somewhat quell.
Still, if the season later were—
O wait the zephyrs!—hasten not—
Just now the raven, on his oak,
In hoarser tones than usual spoke.
My heart forebodes the saddest lot,—
The falcons, nets—Alas, it rains!
My brother, are thy wants supplied—
Provisions, shelter, pocket-guide,
And all that unto health pertains?"
These words occasion'd some demur
In our imprudent traveler.
But restless curiosity

Prevail'd at last; and so said he,—
"The matter is not worth a sigh;
Three days, at most, will satisfy,
And then, returning, I shall tell
You all the wonders that befell,—
With scenes enchanting and sublime
Shall sweeten all our coming time.
Who seeth nought, hath nought to say.
My travel's course, from day to day,
Will be the source of great delight.
A store of tales I shall relate,—
Say there I lodged at such a date,
And saw there such and such a sight.
You'll think it all occurr'd to you.—"
On this, both, weeping, bade adieu.
Away the lonely wanderer flew.—
A thunder-cloud began to lower;
He sought, as shelter from the shower,
The only tree that graced the plain,
Whose leaves ill turn'd the pelting rain.
The sky once more serene above,
On flew our drench'd and dripping dove,
And dried his plumage as he could.
Next, on the borders of a wood,
He spied some scatter'd grains of wheat,
Which one, he thought, might safely eat;
For there another dove he saw.—
He felt the snare around him draw!
This wheat was but a treacherous bait
To lure poor pigeons to their fate.
The snare had been so long in use,
With beak and wings he struggled loose:
Some feathers perish'd while it stuck;
But, what was worst in point of luck,
A hawk, the cruelest of foes,
Perceived him clearly as he rose,
Off dragging, like a runaway,
A piece of string. The bird of prey
Had bound him, in a moment more,

Much faster than he was before,
But from the clouds an eagle came,
And made the hawk himself his game.
By war of robbers profiting,
The dove for safety plied the wing,
And, lighting on a ruin'd wall,
Believed his dangers ended all.
A roguish boy had there a sling,
(Age pitiless!
We must confess,)
And, by a most unlucky fling,
Half kill'd our hapless dove;
Who now, no more in love
With foreign traveling,
And lame in leg and wing,
Straight homeward urged his crippled flight,
Fatigued, but glad, arrived at night,
In truly sad and piteous plight.
The doves rejoin'd, I leave you all to say,
What pleasure might their pains repay.
Ah, happy lovers, would you roam?—
Pray, let it not be far from home.
To each the other ought to be
A world of beauty ever new;
In each the other ought to see
The whole of what is good and true.

Myself have loved; nor would I then,
For all the wealth of crownèd men,
Or arch celestial, paved with gold,
The presence of those woods have sold,
And fields, and banks, and hillocks, which
Were by the joyful steps made rich,
And smiled beneath the charming eyes
Of her who made my heart a prize—
To whom I pledged it, nothing loath,
And seal'd the pledge with virgin oath.
Ah, when will time such moments bring again!
To me are sweet and charming objects vain—

My soul forsaking to its restless mood?
Oh, did my wither'd heart but dare
To kindle for the bright and good,
Should not I find the charm still there
Is love, to me, with things that were?

10. A fable much admired by Madame de Sevigne is *The Schoolboy, the Pedant and the Owner of a Garden:*

A boy who savor'd of his school,—
A double rogue and double fool,—
By youth and by the privilege
Which pedants have, by ancient right,
To alter reason, and abridge,—
A neighbor robb'd, with fingers light,
Of flowers and fruit. This neighbor had,
Of fruits that make the autumn glad,
The very best—and none but he.
Each season brought, from plant and tree,
To him its tribute; for, in spring,
His was the brightest blossoming.
One day, he saw our hopeful lad
Perch'd on the finest tree he had,
Not only stuffing down the fruit,
But spoiling, like a Vandal brute,
The buds that play advance-courier
Of plenty in the coming year.
The branches, too, he rudely tore,
And carried things to such a pass,
The owner sent his servant o'er
To tell the master of his class.
The latter came, and came attended
By all the urchins of his school,
And thus one plunderer's mischief mended
By pouring in an orchard-full.
It seems the pedant was intent
On making public punishment,
To teach his boys the force of law,

And strike their roguish hearts with awe.
The use of which he first must show
From Vergil and from Cicero,
And many other ancients noted,
From whom, in their own tongues, he quoted.
So long, indeed, his lecture lasted,
While not a single urchin fasted,
That, ere its close, their thievish crimes
Were multiplied a hundred times.

I hate all eloquence and reason
Expended plainly out of season.
Of all the beasts that earth have cursed
While they have fed on't,
The school-boy strikes me as the worst—
Except the pedant.
The better of these neighbors two
For me, I'm sure, would never do.

11. Another fable much admired by Madame de Sevigne is *The Monkey and the Cat:*

Sly Bertrand and Ratto in company sat,
(The one was a monkey, the other a cat,)
Co-servants and lodgers:
More mischievous codgers
Ne'er mess'd from a platter, since platters were flat.
Was anything wrong in the house or about it,
The neighbors were blameless—no mortal could doubt it;
For Bertrand was thievish, and Ratto so nice,
More attentive to cheese than he was to the mice.
One day the two plunderers sat by the fire,
Where chestnuts were roasting, with looks of desire.
To steal them would be a right noble affair.
A double inducement our heroes drew there—
'Twould benefit them, could they swallow their fill,
And then 'twould occasion to somebody ill.
Said Bertrand to Ratto, "My brother, to-day
Exhibit your powers in a masterly way,
And take me these chestnuts, I pray.

Which were I but otherwise fitted
(As I am ingeniously witted)
For pulling things out of the flame,
Would stand but a pitiful game.''
'' 'Tis done,'' replied Ratto, all prompt to obey;
And thrust out his paw in a delicate way.
First giving the ashes a scratch,
He open'd the coveted batch;
Then lightly and quickly impinging,
He drew out, in spite of the singeing,
One after another, the chestnuts at last,—
While Bertrand contrived to devour them as fast.
A servant girl enters. Adieu to the fun.
Our Ratto was hardly contented, says one.—

No more are the princes, by flattery paid
For furnishing help in a different trade,
And burning their fingers to bring
More power to some mightier king.

12. *The Kite and the Nightingale* contains an allusion which may need explanation. Tereus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* married Progne, and by her had a son. Pretending that Progne was dead, he then dishonored her sister Philomela, and cut out her tongue to prevent her disclosing the fact. However, by weaving words into a robe, Philomela told the story to Progne, who killed her son and served him up to his father. The sisters fled and were being pursued by Tereus, when they were all changed into birds. Progne became a swallow, Philomela a nightingale, and Tereus a hawk. It is interesting to compare the last line with what Cato the Censor said in one of his speeches to the Romans, who were clamoring

for corn, and with a sentence from Rabelais: "It is a difficult task, my fellow-citizens, to speak to the belly, because it hath no ears;" "The belly has no ears, nor is it to be filled with fair words."

A noted thief, the kite,
Had set a neighborhood in fright,
And raised the clamorous noise
Of all the village boys,
When, by misfortune,—sad to say,—
A nightingale fell in his way.
Spring's herald begg'd him not to eat
A bird for music—not for meat.
"O spare!" cried she, "and I'll relate
The crime of Tereus and his fate."—
"What's Tereus? Is it food for kites?"—
"No, but a King, of female rights
The villain spoiler, whom I taught
A lesson with repentance fraught;
And, should it please you not to kill,
My song about his fall
Your very heart shall thrill,
As it, indeed, does all."—
Replied the kite, a "pretty thing!
When I am faint and famishing,
To let you go, and hear you sing?"—
"Ah, but I entertain the King!"—
"Well, when he takes you, let him hear
Your tale, full wonderful, no doubt;
For me, a kite, I'll go without."
An empty stomach hath no ear.

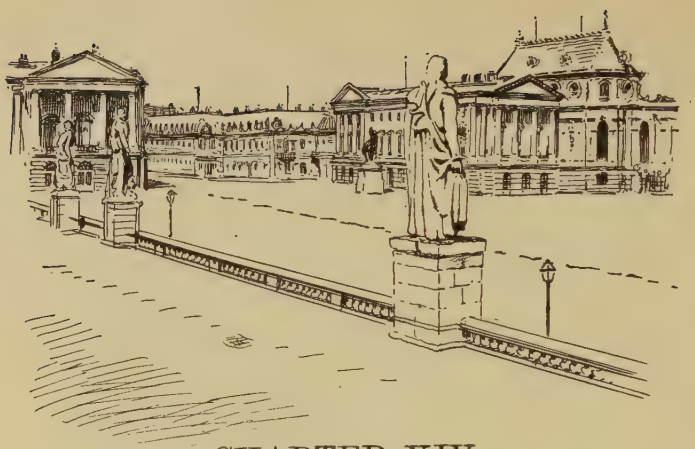
13. *"The Mogul's Dream."* The origin of this fable may be found in the tales of Sadi, the Persian poet. Wright says: "In his *Mogul's Dream* are sentiments worthy of the very high-priest of nature, and expressed in his own na-

tive tongue with a felicity which makes the translator feel that all his labors are but vanity and vexation of spirit."

Long since, a Mogul saw, in dream,
A vizier in Elysian bliss;
No higher joy could be or seem,
Or purer, than was ever his.
Elsewhere was dream'd of by the same
A wretched hermit wrapp'd in flame,
Whose lot e'en touch'd, so pain'd was he,
The partners of his misery.
Was Minos mock'd? or had these ghosts,
By some mistake, exchanged their posts?
Surprise at this the vision broke;
The dreamer suddenly awoke.
Some mystery suspecting in it,
He got a wise one to explain it.
Replied the sage interpreter,
"Let not the thing a marvel seem:
There is a meaning in your dream:
If I have aught of knowledge, sir,
It covers counsel from the gods.
While tenanting these clay abodes,
This vizier sometimes gladly sought
The solitude that favors thought;
Whereas, the hermit, in his cot,
Had longings for a vizier's lot."
To this interpretation dared I add,
The love of solitude I would inspire.
It satisfies the heart's desire
With unencumber'd gifts and glad—
Heaven-planted joys, of stingless sweet,
Aye springing up beneath our feet.
O Solitude! whose secret charms I know—
Retreats that I have loved—when shall I go
To taste, far from a world of din and noise,
Your shades so fresh, where silence has a voice?
When shall their soothing gloom my refuge be?

When shall the sacred Nine, from courts afar,
And cities with all solitude at war,
Engross entire, and teach their votary
The stealthy movements of the spangled nights,
The names and virtues of those errant lights
Which rule o'er human character and fate?
Or, if not born to purposes so great,
The streams, at least, shall win my heartfelt thanks,
While, in my verse, I paint their flowery banks.
Fate shall not weave my life with golden thread,
Nor, 'neath rich fret-work, on a purple bed,
Shall I repose, full late, my care-worn head.
But will my sleep be less a treasure?
Less deep, thereby, and full of pleasure?
I vow it, sweet and gentle as the dew,
Within those deserts sacrifices new;
And when the time shall come to yield my breath,
Without remorse I'll join the ranks of Death.

AMIENS CATHEDRAL



CHAPTER XIV

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV (CONTINUED)
MOLIERE

COMEDY. For the first twenty-five years of the seventeenth century no comedies were produced in France. There were tragi-comedies, pastorals and rough farces, but nothing that could be called refined comedy. Improvisation by the actors on the stage took the place of the carefully written drama, and very little remains of that work, although Moliere probably drew upon it for his farces. At the beginning of the second quarter of the century, however, there was a sudden increase in formal comedies, and a number of men with considerable literary attainment essayed composition in this direction, but the results were never of high grade, and the field may be said to have been almost clear when Moliere appeared with *Les Precieuses Ridicules.* In

Corneille's early comedies of contemporary manners, there was a considerable grace and charm, but even he did not go far beyond the type then in existence, where extravagance in plot and crudeness in the development of character were universal. The braggart, the peasant, the parasite, the extravagant poet, the knavish valet, the amorous old man, all contributed their share to the mirth and appeared again and again in plays, so that little originality could be claimed by any.

II. Moliere. In 1622 Jean-Baptiste Poquelin was born in Paris, the son of a prosperous upholsterer, who was also *valet de chambre* to the King. The father was proud of his son and educated him at the College of Clermont, where he had as his schoolmates the Prince De Conti and other gentlemen's sons, not a few of whom subsequently achieved distinction. Later we find him receiving instruction from the philosopher and astronomer Gassendi, and then studying law at the University of Orleans.

A lawyer's career was, however, quite unattractive to Jean Poquelin, who found the hereditary office of valet to the King no more desirable, so at the age of twenty-one he abandoned the law and followed his inclinations to join a little company which founded the Illustre Theatre. At this time Poquelin took the stage name of Moliere, by which he has continued universally to be known. After a few months of precarious existence, the Il-

lustre Theatre went into bankruptcy, but Moliere was by no means discouraged, and, though several times imprisoned for debt, he left Paris in 1646 still determined to follow the theatrical profession. Then for twelve years he traveled about the provinces, meeting with all the vicissitudes that such a life could bring, but acquiring an infinite fund of knowledge of men and things. He was a hard-working man, for besides playing his part with others upon the stage, he selected, revised, and adapted the plays they used, and ultimately began to write farces of his own.

Twelve years later, at the age of thirty-six, he returned to Paris and he and his company played before the King. First they presented Corneille's tragedy *Nicomede,* after which Moliere begged the King to be allowed to produce one of the plays they had been in the habit of using in the provinces. The permission having been granted, a little farce was given which highly pleased the audience, and from that time the company was called "Les Comediens de Monsieur," and it played in the Louvre at the Petit Bourbon.

At thirty-seven Moliere had written only minor farces, and it was not until 1659 that his genius became apparent with the production of *Les Precieuses Ridicules,* whose immense success established him in public favor and made even those whom he satirized admire him.

When he was forty years old Moliere married a gay, fascinating but frivolous actress of

MOLIÈRE

1622–1673

THE GREATEST WRITER OF COMEDIES IN THE HISTORY OF FRENCH LITERATURE.

twenty, who belonged to his company and who was largely indebted to her husband for her education and training. The marriage was extremely unhappy, and there is no doubt but Moliere drew from his own stormy married life many of those scenes of jealousy, suspicion and wrath that convulsed his audience with laughter.

His later plays won great admiration, especially from the King, but they no less certainly created bitter enemies, who attacked him with every weapon at their command. As Moliere appeared on the stage, they satirized him as an actor; his health was poor, and they rejoiced in it; his domestic troubles were matters of public ridicule; and after he produced *Tartuffe* he was denounced as an impious heretic fit only for the stake, from which the friendship of the King was able scarcely to save him.

Melancholy by nature, unhappy in his home life, suffering from a delicate throat and chest, living an extremely abstemious life, and working long hours, Moliere seemed to retain the wonderful vigor of his mentality to the end, and late in life he produced a number of noteworthy comedies besides his great masterpieces. *Les Femmes Savantes* was produced in 1672. At the age of fifty-one he wrote *Le Malade Imaginaire* (*The Imaginary Illness*) and produced it on the stage. His health was very delicate; he was suffering from a racking cough and was urged by his friends and his wife, who had been reconciled to him, not to

go out. "Alas," he said, "what can I do? I have fifty poor workmen who will be deprived of bread if I do not play." So he went upon the stage, carried out his part nearly to the end of the play, hiding his sufferings skillfully from the spectators, but in one of the last scenes he fell in a faint and was carried to his home, where after a violent fit of coughing, he died a few hours later.

Two priests who were summoned refused to attend him in his last agony, he was denied burial in consecrated ground, and the King was obliged personally to issue an order for his funeral. The hostility of the Church was due, not to any vice in the man, but to the fact that he was an actor, and all actors were under the ban at that time. At night, with few religious rites, a hundred of his friends, each carrying a torch, bore the greatest comic dramatist of France to his last resting place. In the following century, however, his bust was placed in the Academy, and a monument was erected to his memory in the Cemetery of Pere Lachaise.

III. The Works of Moliere. Besides his masterpieces, which we shall consider in greater detail, Moliere produced a number of excellent comedies, which still may be read and enjoyed by all classes.

In *L'Ecole des Maris* (*The School for Husbands*) (1661), two brothers, Ariste and Sganarelle, have been given charge of two orphan sisters, Isabelle and Leonore, over whose education each has presided after his own man-

ner—Sganarelle, suspicious and severe; Ariste, wisely indulgent. Now, each seeks the hand of his ward in marriage. The amiable Ariste, aided by a gay but sensible soubrette, is happily rewarded, while Sganarelle, because of his vexatious conduct, loses his lady to a younger and handsomer man. This is a comedy of character, in which Moliere expresses his own personal plea for freedom and natural life.

In *L'Ecole des Femmes* (*The School for Wives*) (1661), Arnolphe would train Agnes from childhood to make of her a model wife, by keeping her in jealous seclusion and in infantile ignorance, but young Horace finds a way to balk the plans of Arnolphe. The moral of the play is that the charming Agnes belongs by right of her youth to Horace, and the middle-aged, foolish Arnolphe must put up with the order of nature, even if his despair is pathetic. This play gave some offense to the devout and marked the beginning of the opposition which ultimately became so violent.

In *Georges Dandin* an unequal marriage between a wealthy farmer and a fine lady is mocked with bitter gayety; in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (*The Gentleman Shopkeeper*) a lesson is given to those who have the ambition to rise above their proper rank; in *Le Malade Imaginaire* is the greatest of Moliere's diatribes against the medical profession, at which he often railed. His finest plays, however, named, perhaps, in order of importance, are *Les Precieuses Ridicules, Les Femmes Sa-*

vantes, Don Juan, Tartuffe and *Le Misanthrope,* each of which we shall consider more closely. Many authorities present the plays in another rank in importance, placing *Tartuffe* and *Le Misanthrope* nearer the head of the list. Our extracts are from the prose translation by Charles Heron Wall.

IV. "Les Precieuses Ridicules." In his first satiric play on contemporary manners, Moliere selected a subject with which he was very familiar. We have no word which translates *precieuse,* but those who have read the account of the salons in an earlier chapter will have no difficulty in understanding its meaning. We may translate the title *The Ridiculous Affected Ladies,* but it is an awkward form, at best. There is no doubt that Moliere intended to attack the celebrated coterie who frequented the *salon* of Mlle. de Scudery and other imitators of Hotel de Rambouillet, for he had always resisted their influence, and his own concise style was a constant rebuke to their euphuisms and insipid paraphrases. This was his first protest against their absurd affectations, but he renewed it in at least three other plays, including *Le Misanthrope* and *Les Femmes Savantes.*

Moliere had himself known the *precieuses* of the provinces, and not wishing directly to attack the salons of Paris, he brings two good bourgeois ladies, the niece and daughter of Gorgibus, to Paris and establishes them there, with the result that Madelon and Cathos reject

their respective lovers, La Grange and Du Croisy, who are unversed in the affectations of the salons. When Gorgibus learns what has been done, the following conversation takes place:

Gor. I believe these foolish girls have determined to ruin me with their ointments. I see nothing about here but white of eggs, milk of roses, and a thousand fiddle-faddles that I know nothing about. Since we came here they have used the fat of a dozen hogs at least, and four servants might live on the sheep's trotters they daily require.

Enter MADELON *and* CATHOS

There is great need, surely, for you to spend so much money in greasing your nozzles! Tell me, please, what you can have done to those gentlemen, that I see them going away so coldly. Did I not ask you to receive them as persons whom I intended to give you for husbands?

Mad. What! my father, could you expect us to have any regard for the unconventional proceedings of such people?

Cat. What! my uncle, could you expect any girl, to the smallest extent in her senses, to reconcile herself to their persons?

Gor. And what is there the matter with them?

Mad. A fine way of making love to be sure, to begin at once with marriage!

Gor. And what would you have them begin with—concubinage? Does not their conduct honor you as much as it does me? Can anything be more complimentary to you? and is not the sacred bond they propose a proof of the honesty of their intentions?

Mad. Ah! father, how all you are saying betrays the vulgarity of your taste; I am ashamed to hear you speak as you do, and really you should make yourself acquainted with the fashionable air of things.

Gor. I care neither for airs nor songs. I tell you that marriage is a holy and sacred thing, and that they acted like honorable men in speaking of it to you from the first.

Mad. Really, if everybody was like you, how soon a love-romance would be ended! What a fine thing it would have been if at starting Cyrus had married Mandane, and Aronce had been given straight off to Clélie!

Gor. What in the world is the girl talking about!

Mad. My cousin will tell you, as well as I, that marriage, my father, should never take place till after other adventures. A lover who wants to be attractive should know how to utter noble sentiments, to sigh delicate, tender, and rapturous vows. He should pay his addresses according to rules. In the first place, it should be either at church or in the promenade, or at some public ceremony, that he first sees the fair one with whom he falls in love; or else fate should will his introduction to her by a relation or a friend, and he should leave her house thoughtful and melancholy. For a while, he conceals his love from the object of his passion, but in the meantime pays her several visits, during which he never fails to start some subject of gallantry to exercise the thoughts of the assembled company. The day arrives for him to make his declaration. This should take place usually in some leafy garden-walk, whilst everybody is out of hearing. The declaration is followed by our immediate displeasure, which shows itself by our blushing, and causes our lover to be banished for a time from our presence. He finds afterwards the means to appease us; to accustom us, by insensible degrees, to the rehearsal of his passion, and to obtain from us that confession which causes us so much pain. Then follow adventures: rivals who thwart our mutual inclination, persecution of fathers, jealousy based upon false appearances, reproaches, despair, elopement, and its consequences. It is thus things are carried on in high

society, and in a well-regulated love-affair these rules cannot be dispensed with. But to plunge headlong into a proposal of marriage, to make love and the marriage settlements go hand in hand, is to begin the romance at the wrong end. Once more, father, there is nothing more shopkeeper-like than such proceedings, and the bare mention of it makes me feel ill.

Gor. What the devil is the meaning of all this jargon? Is that what you call "elevated style"?

Cat. Indeed, uncle, my cousin states the case with all veracity. How can one be expected to receive with gratification persons whose addresses are altogether an impropriety? I feel certain that they have never seen the map of the *Country of Tenderness,* and that *Billets-doux, Trifling attentions, Flattering letters,* and *Sprightly verses* are regions unknown to them. Was it not plainly marked in all their person? Are you not conscious that their external appearance was in no way calculated to give a good opinion of them at first sight? To come on a love-visit with a leg lacking adornment, a hat destitute of feathers, a head unartistic as to its hair, and a coat that suffers from an indigence of ribbons! Heavens! what lovers! What frugality of dress! What barrenness of conversation! It is not to be endured. I also noticed that their bands were not made by the fashionable milliner, and that their hauts-de-chausses were at least six inches too narrow.

Gor. I believe they are both crazed; not a word can I understand of all this gibberish—Cathos, and you, Madelon. . . .

Mad. Pray, father, give up those strange names, and call us otherwise.

Gor. Strange names! what do you mean? are they not those which were given you at your baptism?

Mad. Ah me! how vulgar you are! My constant wonder is that you could ever have such a soul of wit as I for a daughter. Did ever anybody in refined language speak of "Cathos" and "Madelon," and must you not

admit that a name such as either of these, would be quite sufficient to ruin the finest romance in the world?

Cat. It is but too true, uncle, that it painfully shocks a delicate ear to hear those names pronounced; and the name of Polixène which my cousin has chosen, and that of Aminte which I have taken for myself, have a charm which you cannot deny.

Gor. Listen to me; one word is as good as a hundred. I won't have you adopt any other name than those given to you by your godfathers and godmothers; and as for the gentlemen in question, I know their families and their fortune, and I have made up my mind that you shall take them for husbands. I am tired of having you upon my hands; it is too much for a man of my age to have to look after two young girls.

Cat. Well, uncle, all I can say is that I think marriage is altogether a very shocking thing. How can one endure the thought of lying by the side of a man really unclothed.

Mad. Let us enjoy for a time the *beau monde* of Paris, where we are only just arrived. Let us leisurely weave our own romance, and do not, we beg, hasten so much its conclusion.

Gor. (aside). They are far gone, there is no doubt about it. *(aloud)* Once more, understand me, get rid of all this nonsense, for I mean to have my own way; to cut matters short, either you will both be married before long or, upon my word, you shall both be shut up in a nunnery. I'll take my oath of it. [*Exit.*

In revenge the rejected lovers employ their valets, Mascarille and Jodelet, to play the part of fashionable men and expose the weakness of the ladies. Clothed in his master's finery, the "Marquis" of Mascarille calls upon the ladies, flatters them, promises to introduce them to society, and discusses poetry in the accepted "precious" style. Finally he says:

Masc. By the bye, let me repeat to you some extempore verses I made yesterday at the house of a friend of mine, a duchess, whom I went to see. You must know that I'm a wonderful hand at impromptus.

Cat. An impromptu is the touchstone of genius.

Masc. Listen. *Mad.* We are all ears.

Masc.
Oh! oh! I was not taking care.
While thinking not of harm, I watch my fair.
Your lurking eye my heart doth steal away.
Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief! I say.

Cat. Ah me! It is gallant to the last degree.

Masc. Yes, all I do has a certain easy air about it. There is a total absence of the pedant about all my writings.

Mad. They are thousands and thousands of miles from that.

Masc. Did you notice the beginning? *Oh! oh!* There is something exceptional in that *oh! oh!* like a man who bethinks himself all of a sudden—*Oh! oh!* Surprise is well depicted, is it not? *Oh! oh!*

Mad. Yes, I think that *oh! oh!* admirable.

Masc. At first sight it does not seem much.

Cat. Ah! what do you say? these things cannot be too highly valued.

Mad. Certainly, and I would rather have composed that *oh! oh!* than an epic poem.

Masc. Upon my word now, you have good taste.

Mad. Why, yes, perhaps it's not altogether bad.

Masc. But do you not admire also, *I was not taking care? I was not taking care:* I did not notice it, quite a natural way of speaking you know: *I was not taking care. While thinking not of harm:* whilst innocently, without forethought, like a poor sheep, *I watch my fair:* that is to say, I amuse myself by considering, observing, contemplating you. *Your lurking eye,*—what do you think of this word *lurking?* Do you not think it well chosen?

Cat. Perfectly well.

Masc. *Lurking,* hiding: you would say, a cat just going to catch a mouse: *lurking.*

Mad. Nothing could be better.

Masc. *My heart doth steal away:* snatch it away, carries it off from me. *Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief!* Would you not imagine it to be a man shouting and running after a robber? *Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief!*

Mad. It must be acknowledged that it is witty and gallant.

Masc. I must sing you the tune I made to it.

Cat. Ah! you have learnt music?

Masc. Not a bit of it!

Cat. Then how can you have set it to music?

Masc. People of my position know everything without ever having learnt.

Mad. Of course it is so, my dear.

Masc. Just listen, and see if the tune is to your taste; hem, hem, la, la, la, la, la. The brutality of the season has greatly injured the delicacy of my voice; but it is of no consequence; permit me, without ceremony: *(he sings.)*

Cat. What soul-subduing music! One would willingly die while listening.

Mad. What soft languor creeps over one's heart!

Masc. Do you not find the thought clearly expressed in the song? *Stop thief,* stop *thief.* And then as if one suddenly cried out *stop, stop, stop, stop,* stop thief. Then all at once, like a person out of breath—*Stop* thief!

Mad. It shows a knowledge of perfect beauty, every part is inimitable, both the words and the air enchant me.

Cat. I never yet met with anything worthy of being compared to it.

Masc. All I do comes naturally to me. I do it without study.

Mad. Nature has treated you like a fond mother; you are her spoiled child.

Masc. How do you spend your time, ladies?

Cat. Oh! in doing nothing at all.

Mad. Until now, we have been in a dreadful dearth of amusements.

Masc. I should be happy to take you to the play one of these days, if you would permit me; the more so as there is a new piece going to be acted which I should be glad to see in your company.

Mad. There is no refusing such an offer.

Masc. But I must beg of you to applaud it well when we are there, for I have promised my help to praise up the piece; and the author came to me again this morning to beg my assistance. It is the custom for authors to come and read their new plays to us people of rank, so that they may persuade us to approve their work, and to give them a reputation. I leave you to imagine, if, when we say anything, the pit dare contradict us. As for me, I am most scrupulous, and when once I have promised my assistance to a poet I always call out "splendid! beautiful!" even before the candles are lighted.

Mad. Do not speak of it; Paris is a most wonderful place; a hundred things happen every day there of which country-people, however clever they may be, have no idea.

Cat. It is sufficient; now we understand this, we shall consider ourselves under the obligation of praising all that is said.

Masc. I do not know whether I am mistaken; but you seem to me to have written some play yourselves.

Mad. Ah! there may be some truth in what you say.

Masc. Upon my word, we must see it. Between ourselves I have composed one which I intend shortly to bring out.

Cat. Indeed; and to what actors do you mean to give it?

Masc. What a question! Why, to the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne of course; they alone can give a proper value to a piece. The others are a pack of ignoramuses, who recite their parts just as one speaks every day of one's life; they have no idea of thundering out verses, or of pausing at a fine passage. How

can one make out where the fine lines are if the actor does not stop at them, and thus tell you when you are to applaud?

Cat. Certainly, there is always a way of making an audience feel the beauties of a play; and things are valued according to the way they are put before you.

Masc. How do you like my lace, feathers, and etceteras? Do you find any incongruity between them and my coat?

Cat. Not the slightest.

Masc. The ribbon is well-chosen, you think?

Mad. Astonishingly well. It is real Perdrigeon.

Masc. What do you say of my canions?

Mad. They look very fashionable.

Masc. I can at least boast that they are a whole quarter of a yard wider than those usually worn.

Mad. I must acknowledge that I have never yet seen the elegance of the adjustment carried to such perfection.

Masc. May I beg of you to direct your olfactory senses to these gloves?

Mad. They smell terribly sweet.

Cat. I never inhaled a better made perfume.

Masc. And this? (*He bends forward for them to smell his powdered wig.*)

Mad. It has the true aristocratic odor. One's finest senses are exquisitely affected by it.

Masc. You say nothing of my plumes! What do you think of them?

Cat. Astonishingly beautiful!

Masc. Do you know that the ostrich feather cost me a louis d'or? It is my way to prefer indiscriminately everything of the best.

Mad. I assure you that I greatly sympathize with you. I am furiously delicate about everything I wear, and even my socks must come from the best hands.

Masc. *(crying out suddenly).* O! O! O! gently, gently ladies; ladies, this is unkind, I have good reason to complain of your behavior; it is not fair.

Cat. What is it? What is the matter?

Masc. Matter? What, both of you against my heart, and at the same time too! attacking me right and left! ah! it is contrary to fair play; I shall cry out murder.

Cat. (*to* MADELON). It must be acknowledged that he says things in a manner altogether his own.

Mad. His way of putting things is exquisitely admirable.

Cat. (*to* MASCARILLE). You are more afraid than hurt, and your heart cries out before it is touched.

Masc. The deuce! why it is sore from head to foot.

Jodelet, valet of Du Croisy, appears as the Viscount of Jodelet, and the affected conversation continues. A dance is proposed, neighbors are invited in, and the merriment is about to begin when the masters of the masquerading men appear, beat their servants soundly, strip them of their borrowed finery and tell the ladies they may now make love to the valets as much as they please. Gorgibus gives them plenty of good advice, and Mascarille gives this parting shot:

Come along, come along, my friend, let us go and seek our fortunes elsewhere, I see that nothing but outward show pleases here, and that they have no consideration for virtue unadorned.

The musicians are given a beating for their pay, and the girls are told to run and hide themselves from their disgrace.

V. "LES FEMMES SAVANTES." In *Les Femmes Savantes* (*The Learned Women*) (1672), Moliere returned to the theme he had used in *Les Precieuses Ridicules,* but varied it to suit the occasion. The later *precieuses* had affected the sciences and were patronesses of them all,

although some of the old romantic features survived. The Hotel de Rambouillet was closed, but the salon had found its way among the middle classes. Accordingly, Moliere selects a bourgeois family for his subject and arranges its members on two sides, one of which contains Chrysale, the father, with his rude common sense; his wise brother, Ariste; his faithful servant, Martine, who, in spite of her bad grammar, is sound and quick-witted; and the lovely Henriette, a most delightful creation full of feminine charm. On the other side are Philaminte, mother and wife; Belise, most romantic of *precieuses;* Armande, the no less affected sister of Henriette; Trissotin, a wit and parasite; and Vadius, an affected man of learning. The question of deepest interest before them is whether Clitandre, a delightfully wholesome young man, shall marry Henriette, or whether she shall be given to Trissotin. Moliere acted the part of Chrysale.

In the first act Henriette and Armande discuss the proposed marriage of the former to Clitandre. Henriette is a fondly domestic little woman, who defends her ideas against her pedantic sister. It appears that Clitandre at one time loved Armande, but that she rejected him because of his lack of refinement; and now she cannot resist telling Henriette that after all Clitandre is probably inconstant, and they agree to test him. He is frank enough to confess his previous infatuation for Armande, but assures them both that he now be-

longs wholly to Henriette. She advises him to go at once to her parents for their consent, a move he is only too anxious to make. The sisters wrangle a little, and Henriette says that Armande would bring her lover back if she could, while Armande feels that such a thing would be easy. Henriette advises Clitandre to get the consent of her mother and aunt first. Clitandre says:

Cli. I am so sincere that I can never bring myself to praise, even in your sister, that side of her character which resembles theirs. Female doctors are not to my taste. I like a woman to have some knowledge of everything; but I cannot admire in her the revolting passion of wishing to be clever for the mere sake of being clever. I prefer that she should, at times, affect ignorance of what she really knows. In short, I like her to hide her knowledge, and to be learned without publishing her learning abroad, quoting the authors, making use of pompous words, and being witty under the least provocation. I greatly respect your mother, but I cannot approve her wild fancies, nor make myself an echo of what she says. I cannot support the praises she bestows upon that literary hero of hers, Mr. Trissotin, who vexes and wearies me to death. I cannot bear to see her have any esteem for such a man, and to see her reckon among men of genius a fool whose writings are everywhere hissed; a pedant whose prolific pen furnishes all the markets with waste paper.

Hen. His writings, his speeches, in short, everything in him is unpleasant to me; and I feel towards him as you do. But as he possesses great ascendancy over my mother, you must force yourself to yield somewhat. A lover should make his court where his heart is engaged; he should win the favor of every one; and in order to have nobody opposed to his love, try to please even the dog of the house.

Cli. Yes, you are right; but Mr. Trissotin is hateful to me. I cannot consent, in order to win his favor, to dishonor myself by praising his works. It is through them that he was first brought to my notice, and I knew him before I had seen him. I saw in the trash which he writes all that his pedantic person everywhere shows forth; the persistent haughtiness of his presumption, the intrepidity of the good opinion he has of his person, the calm overweening confidence which at all times makes him so satisfied with himself, and with the writings of which he boasts; so that he would not exchange his renown for all the honors of the greatest general.

Hen. You have good eyes to see all that.

Cli. I even guessed what he was like; and by means of the verses with which he deluges us, I saw what the poet must be. So well had I pictured to myself all his features and gait that one day meeting a man in the galleries of the Palace of Justice, I laid a wager that it must be Trissotin—and I won my wager.

His interview with Belise, the aunt, follows:

Cli. Suffer a lover, Madam, to profit by such a propitious moment to reveal to you his sincere devotion.

Bel. Ah! gently! Beware of opening your heart too freely to me; although I have placed you in the list of my lovers, you must use no interpreter but your eyes, and never explain by another language desires which are an insult to me. Love me; sigh for me; burn for my charms; but let me know nothing of it. I can shut my eyes to your secret flame, as long as you keep yourself to dumb interpreters; but if your mouth meddle in the matter, I must for ever banish you from my sight.

Cli. Do not be alarmed at the intentions of my heart. Henriette is, Madam, the object of my love, and I come ardently to conjure you to favor the love I have for her.

Bel. Ah! truly now, the subterfuge shows excellent wit. This subtle evasion deserves praise; and in all the romances I have glanced over, I have never met with anything more ingenious.

Cli. This is no attempt at wit, Madam; it is the avowal of what my heart feels. Heaven has bound me to the beauty of Henriette by the ties of an unchangeable love. Henriette holds me in her lovely chains; and to marry Henriette is the end of all my hopes. You can do much towards it; and what I have come to ask you is that you will condescend to second my addresses.

Bel. I see the end to which your demand would gently lead, and I understand whom you mean under that name. The metaphor is clever; and not to depart from it, let me tell you that Henriette rebels against matrimony, and that you must love her without any hope of having your love returned.

Cli. But, Madam, what is the use of such a perplexing debate? Why will you persist in believing what is not?

Bel. Dear me! Do not trouble yourself so much. Leave off denying what your looks have often made me understand. Let it suffice that I am content with the subterfuge your love has so skillfully adopted, and that under the figure to which respect has limited it, I am willing to suffer its homage; always provided that its transports, guided by honor, offer only pure vows on my altars.

Cli. But. . . . .

Bel. Farewell. This ought really to satisfy you, and I have said more than I wished to say.

Cli. But your error . . . .

Bel. Leave me. I am blushing now; and my modesty has had much to bear.

Cli. May I be hanged if I love you; and . . . .

Bel. No, no. I will hear nothing more.

The second act shows Ariste as ambassador for Clitandre asking Chrysale for his daugh-

ter's hand. Belise overhears the request and claims that Clitandre has already proposed to her and the request is but a subterfuge. When the brothers hear her story, they think her crazy, and Chrysale welcomes Clitandre as a son-in-law and agrees to get the consent of his wife. Just then the kitchen maid, Martine, enters; the following ridiculous scene ensues:

Mar. Just like my luck! Alas! they be true sayings, they be—"Give a dog a bad name and hang him," and—"One doesn't get fat in other folks' service."

Chry. What is it? What is the matter with you, Martine?

Mar. What is the matter?

Chry. Yes.

Mar. The matter is that I am sent away, Sir.

Chry. Sent away?

Mar. Yes; mistress has turned me out.

Chry. I don't understand; why has she?

Mar. I am threatened with a sound beating if I don't go.

Chry. No; you will stop here. I am quite satisfied with you. My wife is a little hasty at times, and I will not, no . . .

Enter PHILAMINTE *and* BELISE

Phi. (*seeing* MARTINE). What! I see you here, you hussy! Quick, leave this place, and never let me set my eyes upon you again.

Chry. Gently.

Phi. No; I will have it so.

Chry. What?

Phi. I insist upon her going.

Chry. But what has she done wrong, that you wish her in this way to . . . . .?

Phi. What! you take her part?

Chry. Certainly not.

Phi. You side with her against me?

Chry. Oh! dear me, no; I only ask what she is guilty of.

Phi. Am I one to send her away without just cause?

Chry. I do not say that; but we must, with servants . . . .

Phi. No; she must leave this place. I tell you.

Chry. Let it be so; who says anything to the contrary?

Phi. I will have no opposition to my will.

Chry. Agreed.

Phi. And like a reasonable husband, you should take my part against her, and share my anger.

Chry. So I do. (*Turning towards* MARTINE). Yes; my wife is right in sending you away, baggage that you are; your crime cannot be forgiven.

Mar. What is it I have done, then?

Chry. (*aside*). Upon my word, I don't know.

Phi. She is capable even now of looking upon it as nothing.

Chry. Has she caused your anger by breaking some looking-glass or some china?

Phi. Do you think that I would send her away for that? And do you fancy that I should get angry for so little?

Chry. (*to* MARTINE). What is the meaning of this? (*To* PHILAMINTE) The thing is of great importance, then?

Phi. Certainly; did you ever find me unreasonable?

Chry. Has she, through carelessness, allowed some ewer or silver dish to be stolen from us?

Phi. That would be of little moment.

Chry. (*to* MARTINE). Oh! oh! I say, Miss! (*To* PHILAMINTE) What! has she shown herself dishonest?

Phi. It is worse than that.

Chry. Worse than that?

Phi. Worse.

Chry. (*to* MARTINE). How the deuce! you jade. (*To* PHILAMINTE). What! has she . . . .?

Phil. She has with unparalleled impudence, after thirty lessons, insulted my ear by the improper use of a low and vulgar word condemned in express terms by Vaugelas.

Chry. Is that . . . .?

Phi. What! In spite of our remonstrances to be always sapping the foundation of all knowledge—of grammar which rules even kings, and makes them, with a high hand, obey her laws.

Chry. I thought her guilty of the greatest crime.

Phi. What! You do not think the crime unpardonable?

Chry. Yes, yes.

Phi. I should like to see you excuse her.

Chry. Heaven forbid!

Bel. It is really pitiful. All constructions are destroyed by her; yet she has a hundred times been told the laws of the language.

Mar. All that you preach there is no doubt very fine, but I don't understand your jargon, not I.

Phi. Did you ever see such impudence? To call a language founded on reason and polite custom a jargon!

Mar. Provided one is understood, one speaks well enough, and all your fine speeches don't do me no good.

Phi. You see! Is not that her way of speaking, *don't do me no good!*

Bel. O intractable brains! How is it that, in spite of the trouble we daily take, we cannot teach you to speak with congruity? In putting *not* with *no,* you have spoken redundantly, and it is, as you have been told, a negative too many.

Mar. Oh my! I ain't no scholar like you, and I speaks straight out as they speaks in our place.

Phi. Ah! who can bear it?

Bel. What a horrible solecism!

Phi. It is enough to destroy a delicate ear.

Bel. You are, I must acknowledge, very dull of understanding: *they* is in the plural number, and *speaks* is in the singular. Will you thus all your life offend grammar?[1]

[1]Grammaire in Moliere's time was pronounced as grand'mere is now. Gammer seems the nearest approach to this in English.

Mar. Who speaks of offending either gammer or gaffer?

Phi. O heavens!

Bel. The word *grammar* is misunderstood by you, and I have told you a hundred times where the word comes from.

Mar. Faith, let it come from Chaillot, Auteuil, or Pontoise, I care precious little.

Bel. What a boorish mind! *Grammar* teaches us the laws of the verb and nominative case, as well as of the adjective and substantive.

Mar. Sure, let me tell you, Ma'am, that I don't know those people.

Phi. What martyrdom!

Bel. They are names of words, and you ought to notice how they agree with each other.

Mar. What does it matter whether they agree or fall out?

Phil. (*to* BELISE). Goodness gracious! put an end to such a discussion. (*To* CHRYSALE). And so you will not send her away?

Chry. Oh! yes. (*aside*). I must put up with her caprice. Go, don't provoke her, Martine.

Phi. How! you are afraid of offending the hussy! you speak to her in quite an obliging tone.

Chry. I? not at all. (*In a rough tone*). Go, leave this place. (*In a softer tone*). Go away, my poor girl.

The mother and aunt criticize Chrysale, who protests that he cares more for his body than for his mind, and finally breaks out in a wild tirade against their affectations and against Trissotin, the poet, whom he blames for most of the trouble. When he talks of a husband for Henriette, his wife interrupts and says she has already chosen Trissotin for that honor. Chrysale makes no reply, and his brother severely upbraids him for cowardice.

A long scene in which Trissotin reads his poetry to the learned ladies begins Act Three. It is not unlike the similar scene which we have quoted from *Les Precieuses Ridicules,* and the ladies are all admiration and enthusiasm. Henriette wishes to leave, but is not permitted to go. The *precieuses* talk philosophy ridiculously, and when Vadius, a learned man, is introduced, their conversation in the classics and sciences is full of gushing absurdities. Vadius, without knowing the author of a certain sonnet, criticizes it severely, only to find that it has been written by Trissotin. The two quarrel, blackguard each other violently, and agree to meet, probably to fight a duel of words, in a bookshop. The mother then promises Henriette to Trissotin, and although the former protests pitifully, she is quieted. While Armande is jeering cynically at her, the father comes in with Clitandre and promises Henriette to him, and the two young people are left together on the stage.

At the beginning of Act Four Armande tries to prejudice her mother against Clitandre, but when he overhears her accusations she offers her love to him, which he rejects flatly. The mother declines to consider him for Henriette. Trissotin enters and is being worsted in an argument with Clitandre, when the women interfere in his defense. A messenger appears with a letter attacking Trissotin, but the mother is deaf to everything and declares that the marriage of her choice must take place that

night, while Chrysale with equal vigor declares that the marriage as he has arranged it shall be consummated the same evening.

Act Five opens with a scene in which Henriette in vain begs Trissotin not to marry her, as she has no love for him and no respect for his views or those of her parents. The play concludes:

Chry. I am glad, my daughter, to see you; come here and fulfill your duty, by showing obedience to the will of your father. I will teach your mother how to behave; and, to defy her more fully, here is Martine, whom I have brought back to take her old place in the house again.

Hen. Your resolution deserves praise. I beg of you, father, never to change the disposition you are in. Be firm in what you have resolved, and do not suffer yourself to be the dupe of your own good-nature. Do not yield; and I pray you to act so as to hinder my mother from having her own way.

Chry. How! Do you take me for a booby?

Hen. Heaven forbid!

Chry. Am I a fool, pray?

Hen. I do not say that.

Chry. Am I thought unfit to have the decision of a man of sense?

Hen. No, father.

Chry. Ought I not at my age to know how to be master at home?

Hen. Of course.

Chry. Do you think me weak enough to allow my wife to lead me by the nose?

Hen. Oh, dear, no, father.

Chry. Well, then, what do you mean? You are a nice girl to speak to me as you do!

Hen. If I have displeased you, father, I have done so unintentionally.

Chry. My will is law in this place.
Hen. Certainly, father.
Chry. No one but myself has in this house a right to command.
Hen. Yes, you are right, father.
Chry. It is I who hold the place of chief of the family.
Hen. Agreed.
Chry. It is I who ought to dispose of my daughter's hand.
Hen. Yes, indeed, father.
Chry. Heaven has given me full power over you.
Hen. No one, father, says anything to the contrary.
Chry. And as to choosing a husband, I will show you that it is your father, and not your mother, whom you have to obey.
Hen. Alas! in that you respond to my dearest wish. Exact obedience to you is my earnest wish.
Chry. We shall see if my wife will prove rebellious to my will.
Cli. Here she is, and she brings the notary with her.
Chry. Back me up, all of you.
Mar. Leave that to me; I will take care to encourage you, if need be.

Enter PHILAMINTE, BELISE, ARMANDE, TRISSOTIN, *a* NOTARY *and* MARTINE

Phi. (*to the* NOTARY). Can you not alter your barbarous style, and give us a contract couched in noble language?
Not. Our style is very good, and I should be a blockhead, Madam, to try and change a single word.
Bel. Ah! what barbarism in the very midst of France! But yet, Sir, for learning's sake, allow us, instead of crowns, livres, and francs, to have the dowry expressed in minae and talents, and to express the date in Ides and Kalends.
Not. I, Madam? If I were to do such a thing, all my colleagues would hiss me.
Phi. It is useless to complain of all this barbarism.

Come, Sir, sit down and write. (*Seeing* MARTINE). Ah! this impudent hussy dares to show herself here again! Why was she brought back, I should like to know?

Chry. We will tell you by-and-by; we have now something else to do.

Not. Let us proceed with the contract. Where is the future bride?

Phil. It is the younger daughter I give in marriage.

Not. Good.

Chry. (*showing* HENRIETTE). Yes, Sir, here she is; her name is Henriette.

Not. Very well; and the future bridegroom?

Phi. (*showing* TRISSOTIN). This gentleman is the husband I give her.

Chry. (*showing* CLITANDRE). And the husband I wish her to marry is this gentleman.

Not. Two husbands! Custom does not allow of more than one.

Phi. (*to the* NOTARY). What is it that is stopping you? Put down Mr. Trissotin as my son-in-law.

Chry. For my son-in-law put down Mr. Clitandre.

Not. Try and agree together, and come to a quiet decision as to who is to be the future husband.

Phi. Abide, Sir, abide by my own choice.

Chry. Do, Sir, do according to my will.

Not. Tell me which of the two I must obey.

Phi. (*to* CHRYSALE). What! you will go against my wishes.

Chry. I cannot allow my daughter to be sought after only because of the wealth which is in my family.

Phil. Really! as if any one here thought of your wealth, and as if it were a subject worthy the anxiety of a wise man.

Chry. In short, I have fixed on Clitandre.

Phi. (*showing* TRISSOTIN). And I am decided that for a husband she shall have this gentleman. My choice shall be followed; the thing is settled.

Chry. Heyday! you assume here a very high tone.

Mar. 'Tisn't for the wife to lay down the law, and I be one to give up the lead to the men in everything.

Chry. That is well said.

Mar. If my discharge was as sure as a gun, what I says is, that the hen hadn't ought to be heard when the cock's there.

Chry. Just so.

Mar. And we all know that a man is always chaffed, when at home his wife wears the breeches.

Chry. It is perfectly true.

Mar. I says that, if I had a husband, I would have him be the master of the house. I should not care a bit for him if he played the henpecked husband; and if I resisted him out of caprice, or if I spoke too loud, I should think it quite right if, with a couple of boxes on the ear, he made me pitch it lower.

Chry. You speak as you ought.

Mar. Master is quite right to want a proper husband for his daughter. *Chry.* Certainly.

Mar. Why should he refuse her Clitandre, who is young and handsome, in order to give her a scholar, who is always splitting hairs about something? She wants a husband and not a pedagogue, and, as she cares neither for Greek nor Latin, she has no need of Mr. Trissotin.

Chry. Excellent.

Phi. We must suffer her to chatter on at her ease.

Mar. Learned people are only good to preach in a pulpit, and I have said a thousand times that I wouldn't have a learned man for my husband. Learning is not at all what is wanted in a household. Books agree badly with marriage, and if ever I consent to engage myself to anybody, it will be to a husband who has no other book but me, who doesn't know *a* from *b*—no offense to you, Madam—and, in short, who would be clever only for his wife.

Phi. (*to* CHRYSALE). Is it finished? and have I listened patiently enough to your worthy interpreter?

Chry. She has only said the truth.

Phi. And I, to put an end to this dispute, will have my

wish obeyed. (*Showing* TRISSOTIN). Henriette and this gentleman shall be united at once. I have said it, and I will have it so. Make no reply: and if you have given your word to Clitandre, offer him her elder sister.

Chry. Ah! this is a way out of the difficulty. (*To* HENRIETTE *and* CLITANDRE). Come, do you consent?

Hen. How! father . . . .!

Cli. (*to* CHRYSALE). What! Sir . . . .!

Bel. Propositions more to his taste might be made. But we are establishing a kind of love which must be as pure as the morning-star; the thinking substance is admitted, but not the material substance.

Enter ARISTE

Ari. I am sorry to have to trouble this happy ceremony by the sad tidings of which I am obliged to be bearer. These two letters make me bring news which have made me feel grievously for you. (*To* PHILAMINTE). One letter is for you, and comes from your attorney. (*To* CHRYSALE). The other comes from Lyons.

Phi. What misfortune can be sent us worthy of troubling us?

Ari. You can read it in this letter.

Phi. *"Madam, I have asked your brother to give you this letter; it will tell you news which I did not dare to come and tell you myself. The great negligence you have shown in your affairs has been the cause that the clerk of your attorney has not forewarned me, and you have altogether lost the lawsuit which you ought to have gained."*

Chry. (*to* PHILAMINTE). Your lawsuit lost!

Phi. (*to* CHRYSALE). You seem very much upset; my heart is in no way troubled by such a blow. Show, show like me, a less vulgar mind wherewith to brave the ills of fortune. "Your want of care will cost you forty thousand crowns, and you are condemned to pay this sum with all costs." Condemned? Ah! this is a shocking word, and only fit for criminals.

Ari. It is the wrong word, no doubt, and you, with reason, protest against it. It should have been, "You are desired by an order of the court to pay immediately forty thousand crowns and costs."

Phi. Let us see the other.

Chry. *"Sir, the friendship which binds me to your brother prompts me to take a lively interest in all that concerns you. I know that you had placed your fortune entirely in the hands of Argante and Damon, and I acquaint you with the news that they have both failed."* O Heaven! to lose everything in a moment!

Phi. (*to* CHRYSALE). Ah! what a shameful outburst! Fie! For the truly wise there is no fatal change of fortune, and, losing all, he still remains himself. Let us finish the business we have in hand; and please cast aside your sorrow. (*Showing* TRISSOTIN). His wealth will be sufficient for us and for him.

Tri. No, Madam; cease, I pray you, from pressing this affair further. I see that everybody is opposed to this marriage, and I have no intention of forcing the wills of others.

Phi. This reflection, Sir, comes very quickly after our reverse of fortune.

Tri. I am tired at last of so much resistance, and prefer to relinquish all attempts at removing these obstacles. I do not wish for a heart that will not surrender itself.

Phi. I see in you, and that not to your honor, what I have hitherto refused to believe.

Tri. You may see whatever you please, and it matters little to me how you take what you see. I am not a man to put up with the disgrace of the refusals with which I have been insulted here. I am well worthy of more consideration, and whoever thinks otherwise, I am her humble servant. [*Exit.*

Phi. How plainly he has disclosed his mercenary soul, and how little like a philosopher he has acted.

Cli. I have no pretension to being one; but, Madam, I will link my destiny to yours, and I offer you, with myself, all that I possess.

Phi. You delight me, Sir, by this generous action, and I will reward your love. Yes, I grant Henriette to the eager affection . . . .

Hen. No, mother. I have altered my mind; forgive me if now I resist your will.

Cli. What! do you refuse me happiness, and now that I see everybody for me . . . .

Hen. I know how little you possess, Clitandre; and I always desired you for a husband when, by satisfying my most ardent wishes, I saw that our marriage would improve your fortune. But in the face of such reverses, I love you enough not to burden you with our adversity.

Cli. With you any destiny would be happiness, without you misery.

Hen. Love in its ardor generally speaks thus. Let us avoid the torture of vexatious recriminations. Nothing irritates such a tie more than the wretched wants of life. After a time we accuse each other of all the sorrows that follow such an engagement.

Ari. (*to* HENRIETTE). Is what you have just said the only reason which makes you refuse to marry Clitandre?

Hen. Yes; otherwise you would see me ready to fly to this union with all my heart.

Ari. Suffer yourself, then, to be bound by such gentle ties. The news I brought you was false. It was a stratagem, a happy thought I had to serve your love by deceiving my sister, and by showing her what her philosopher would prove when put to the test.

Chry. Heaven be praised!

Phi. I am delighted at heart for the vexation which this cowardly deserter will feel. The punishment of his sordid avarice will be to see in what a splendid manner this match will be concluded.

Chry. (*to* CLITANDRE). I told you that you would marry her.

Arm. (*to* PHILAMINTE). So, then, you sacrifice me to their love?

Phi. It will not be to sacrifice you; you have the support

of your philosophy, and you can with a contented mind see their love crowned.

Bel. Let him take care, for I still retain my place in his heart. Despair often leads people to conclude a hasty marriage, of which they repent ever after.

Chry. (*to the* NOTARY). Now, Sir, execute my orders, and draw up the contract in accordance with what I said.

VI. "DON JUAN." In *Don Juan; ou, le Festin de Pierre* (*Don Juan; or, the Feast of the Statue*) (1665), Moliere presents in the title character a thoroughly cynical, unbelieving, scornful man, whose lack of religious instinct is emphasized by his extravagant immorality. Atheist and libertine, he still has the reckless courage of the old Spanish hero of the same name. Sganarelle, the faithful servant, criticizes his master's faults, but is so devotedly weak that he obeys every direction. The play is a vigorous character study that carries with it a little of the old-fashioned romance. It was acted for the first time in February, 1665, Moliere taking the part of Sganarelle.

In the beginning Sganarelle, with snuff box in hand, speaks a few ironical sentences, ridiculing the claims for tobacco, which was introduced into France about fourteen years before the play was produced and which still was regarded by many doctors as a specific for almost every disease:

Whatever Aristotle and the whole body of philosophers may say, nothing can be compared to snuff. All honest folks are fond of it, and whoever lives without

snuff is not worthy to live. It not only exhilarates and clears the human brain, but it is also conducive to virtue, and by it one learns to behave like a gentleman. For just notice, as soon as we take to it, how obliging we become towards everybody, and how delighted we are to offer it right and left, wherever we may be. We do not even wait to be asked for it, but forestall people's wishes, so true it is that snuff inspires all who take it with feelings of generosity and disinterestedness.

Sganarelle tells Guzman that Don Juan is probably false to his wife Elvira, whom Guzman serves, that he has been false to a dozen others whom he has married in the same way, and withal has a terrible character for falsehood and deception, but declares that he will deny the story if Guzman ever repeats it. Don Juan enters, says he is tired of Elvira, and when Sganarelle remonstrates he glories in his inconstancy, delights in new conquests, thinks he shall continue to marry once a month at least, and finally sums up his own character in the following words:

In short, nothing can surpass the pleasure of triumphing over the resistance of a beautiful maiden; and I have in this the ambition of conquerors, who go from victory to victory, and cannot bring themselves to put limits to their longings. There is nothing that can restrain my impetuous yearnings. I have a heart big enough to be in love with the whole world; and, like Alexander, I could wish for other spheres to which I could extend my conquests.

When Sganarelle still further remonstrates, Don Juan explains that he is here for the purpose of carrying off a young lady, whose love

for her betrothed, whom he has seen with her, has excited his own passion and made him so jealous that it would be a delight to part the happy bride and groom. Elvira meets Don Juan and asks an explanation, which he offers in saying that he has left her for conscientious reasons, since he had taken her from a convent by force, and he feels that to live with her any longer would be sinful. Recognizing the falsity of his excuse and believing that he is merely infatuated with another woman, she determines to investigate and punish him.

In the second act a countryman tells his girl how he rescued two men from drowning. In their conversation Moliere for the first time brought provincial dialect on the stage. Pierrot makes love to Charlotte, who promises that she will marry him. When Don Juan and Sganarelle enter, it appears that they had failed in their adventure and been nearly drowned. Sganarelle is much disgusted when Don Juan begins to make love to the country girl. She is flattered by his attentions, but puts him off until he has promised to marry her. As he is kissing her hand, Pierrot enters. In the translation his dialect is represented as that of an English farmer:

Pier. (pushing away DON JUAN, *who is kissing* CHARLOTTE'S *hand).* Sober, sir; keep off, plaise; you be gettin' a bit too warm, you mid git the heartburn.

Juan. (pushing back PIERROT *very hard).* What is it brings this lout here?

Pier. (placing himself between DON JUAN *and* CHAR-

LOTTE). I tell 'ee to keep yourself off, an' that you baint a-goin' for to be a-kissin' o' my young woman!

Juan. (*pushing away* PIERROT *again*). Ah! what a row!

Pier. Hang me! but 'twon't do for to shove people about like that.

Char. (*taking* PIERROT *by the arm*). Let him alone, Pierrot.

Pier. What! let 'n alone! I won't then, not I.

Juan. Ah!

Pier. Oh, ah! 'cause you be a fine gen'lman, you can come and kiss our sweethearts afore our face? Get along and kiss your own.

Juan. Eh!

Pier. Eh! (DON JUAN *gives him a box on the ear.*) Now, then! don't hit me. (*another*) Oh, Lor'! (*another*) Oh, Lor'! (*another*) Murder! 'Tis shameful for to beat anybody like that—that id'n the way for to pay for stoppin' o' 'ee from bein' a-drownded.

Char. Don't vex yoursel', Pierrot!

Pier. I will vex myself, and you be a nasty hussy, you be, to let 'n come over you.

Char. Oh, Pierrot! it is not as you think; that gentleman wants to marry me, and you should not throw yourself into a passion.

Pier. What! the devil! You be a-promised to me.

Char. That's no odds, Pierrot; if you love me, did'n you ought to be very glad for me to be a lady?

Pier. No! I tell 'ee, no! I'd a purty sight see thee dead, than wi' anybody else.

Char. Get out, Pierrot; don't make a fool of yourself. When I'm a lady, I'll put something good in your way, and you shall bring the butter and cheese to our house.

Pier. Be burned if ever I'd car' any—not if you was to pay double for it. That's the way then that you do hearkee to what he do tell up? By George! if I'd a-knowed it aforehand, I'd a-seed where I'd a-pulled 'n out o' the water or no, and I'd a-fetched 'n a crack over the head wi' the oar into the bargain.

Juan. (approaching to strike him). What is it you say?

Pier. (sheltering himself behind CHARLOTTE*).* I baint afeard o' nobody, drowned if I be.

Juan. (passing to the side where PIERROT *is).* Only wait a moment.

Pier. (passing on the other side). I don't care then, I don't.

Juan. (running after PIERROT*).* We'll see that.

Pier. (running again behind CHARLOTTE). You're not the first man I've seen.

Juan. Ah!

Sgan. Oh, sir! let the poor fellow alone. It's a shame to beat him. *(to* PIERROT, *placing himself between him and* DON JUAN). Listen, my poor fellow; go away, and don't speak to him.

Pier. (*passing before* SGANARELLE, *and looking fiercely at* DON JUAN). I will speak to him, I will.

Juan. (raising his hand to strike again). Ah! I'll teach you. (PIERROT *ducks his head and* SGANARELLE *receives the blow.)*

Sgan. Plague take the fool!

Juan. (*to* SGANARELLE). You are rewarded for your charity.

Pier. Oh, Lor'! I be goin' to tell her aunt all the whole consarn. [*Exit.*

Juan. (*to* CHARLOTTE). At last, I am the happiest of men, and I would not give up my happiness for all the world could yield. What pleasure it will be when you are my wife, and that . . . .

Enter MATHURINE

Sgan. (*seeing* MATHURINE). Ah! ah!

Math. (*to* DON JUAN). What are you doing here with Charlotte? Are you making love to her too?

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). No, on the contrary, it was she who told me she wished to be my wife, and I was telling her that I was engaged to you.

Char. (*to* DON JUAN). Whatever is it that Mathurine can want with you?

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). She is jealous at seeing me speak to you, and wants me to marry her; but I tell her it is you I want to have.

Math. What! Charlotte . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). All you could tell her would be useless; she has taken it into her head.

Char. How! Mathurine . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). You would speak to her in vain; you cannot get this whim out of her head.

Math. Are you . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). You won't bring her to reason.

Char. I should like . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). She is like a little devil in her obstinacy.

Math. Is it really . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). Say nothing to her, she is crazy.

Char. I think . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). Leave her alone, she is a silly goose.

Math. No, no; I must speak to her.

Char. I must hear her reasons.

Math. What! . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). I feel sure she will tell you that I have promised to marry her.

Char. I . . . .

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). What'll you bet that she says I have promised to take her for my wife?

Math. I say, Charlotte, it isn't honest to meddle with other people's bargains.

Char. It is not honest, Mathurine, to be jealous because the gentleman speaks to me.

Math. The gentleman saw me first.

Char. If he saw you first, he saw me second, and has promised to marry me.

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). Well! what did I tell you?

Math. (*to* CHARLOTTE). I ask your pardon. It is I, and not you, whom he has promised to marry.

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). Did I not guess right?

Char. I ask yours; 'tis t'other way: he promised to marry me.

Math. You are laughing. It was me.

Char. There he is; he can tell whether I speak the truth.

Math. There he is, to say if I am wrong, and if I do not say what is true.

Char. Have you, now, promised to marry her, sir?

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). You are jesting with me.

Math. Is it true, sir, that you have passed her your word to be her husband?

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). How can you have such a thought?

Char. You see that she maintains it.

Juan. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE). Don't take any notice.

Math. You are witness how she will have it.

Juan. (*aside to* MATHURINE). Let her say what she likes.

Char. No, no; we must know what's the truth.

Math. We must have the matter settled.

Char. Yes, Mathurine, I want the gentleman to show you how uncommon green you are.

Math. Yes, Charlotte, I want the gentleman to give you a putting down.

Char. (*to* DON JUAN). Say which is right, if you please, sir.

Math. (*to* DON JUAN). Let's know how 'tis, sir.

Char. You will see, directly.

Math. You will see, too, you will.

Char. (*to* DON JUAN). Say it out.

Math. (*to* DON JUAN). Speak up.

Juan. What would you have me say? You both maintain that I have promised to marry you. Do you not, each of you, in private know where the truth lies, without any more explanation? Why will you force me to say it all over again? The one to whom I made a sincere promise, can she not laugh at what the other says, and need she trouble herself, provided I make good my promise to her? All the talk we can have

does not forward matters. We must act and not talk; deeds are better than words. Therefore, it is by deeds only that I intend to make you agree; and when I marry, it will be easy to see which of the two has won my heart. (*aside to* MATHURINE) Leave her to believe what she likes. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE) Leave her to flatter herself in her own ideas. (*aside to* MATHURINE) I adore you. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE) I am entirely yours. (*aside to* MATHURINE) All other faces are ugly compared with yours. (*aside to* CHARLOTTE) It is impossible to love anybody else after having seen you. (*aloud*) I have a trifling order to give, I must go; I will be back in a quarter of an hour.

After Don Juan departs, Sganarelle tries to warn the girls of his master's marrying propensity, but is unable to accomplish it. A bravo comes and warns Don Juan that twelve men are seeking to do him harm. He asks Sganarelle to change clothes with him.

The beginning of Act Three, however, shows that a better plan has been found, and Don Juan is disguised as a country gentleman, while Sganarelle has the costume of a doctor. The scene proceeds:

Juan. It is true that you look very well. Where in the world have you unearthed this absurd get-up?

Sgan. It is the dress of an old doctor which was left in pawn where I found it, and I had to pay something handsome to get it. But do you know, sir, that this dress has already brought me into some consideration, and that the people I meet salute me, and come to consult me as a skillful man.

Juan. Ah! what?

Sgan. Five or six peasants, both men and women, on seeing me pass, came to seek my advice about divers diseases.

Juan. You answered that you knew nothing about it?

Sgan. No; not I! I wished to uphold the honor of the cloth. I reasoned on their sickness and gave prescriptions to each.

Juan. What remedies did you prescribe?

Sgan. To tell the truth, I gave anything that came into my head, and prescribed at random. It would be an amusing thing if some of my patients recovered and came and thanked me, after all.

Juan. And why not? Why should you not have the same privileges as all other doctors? They have no more to do with a cure than you have, and all their science is pure grimace. If, by good fortune, things go well, they receive the honor; and you, like them, can profit by the good luck of the patient, and have attributed to your remedies all the proceeds from a lucky chance or from the resources of nature!

Sgan. What, sir, you are also a disbeliever in medicine?

Juan. It is one of the greatest errors which exist.

Sgan. What! Have you no belief either in senna, cassia, nor antimonial wine?

Juan. Why would you have me believe in these things?

Sgan. Well, you must be of a very unbelieving disposition! Yet you see how for some time back antimonial wine has occupied the public mind. The miracles it has accomplished have convinced the most incredulous, and it is but three weeks ago, that I, who am now speaking to you, saw its wonderful power.

Juan. How was that?

Sgan. There was a man who had been six days at death's door; no one knew what to do for him; every remedy had failed. At last the doctors thought of giving him the antimonial wine.

Juan. And he was saved, no doubt?

Sgan. No; he died.

Juan. Wonderful result!

Sgan. Why, yes! For six whole days he could not die, and it killed him at once. Do you wish for anything more efficacious?

After a few unimportant incidents, Don Juan interferes in a quarrel where three men are attacking one, and after a brave battle puts the three to flight. Don Carlos, who has been rescued, proves to be the brother of Elvira and to be searching for Don Juan to punish him. The latter says he knows the guilty man and will produce him at any time in any place Don Carlos names. While this conversation is going on, Don Alonzo, another brother of Elvira's, enters, recognizes Don Juan and wishes to punish him at once, but Don Carlos insists that as his life has just been saved, he shall grant the offender another chance to save himself. Don Juan protests that he is ready to meet them at any time and anywhere. Sganarelle protests against his master's wickedness, but the latter insists that he is still bent on gratifying his love with new faces. While they are talking, they come upon the tomb of a commandant whom Don Juan has killed in one of his affairs. It is a beautiful marble tomb, and, having approached it, they open the door and see there a wonderful statue of the commandant. Don Juan recklessly invites the commandant to sup with him and Sganarelle, and they are both astonished to see the statue nod its head in acceptance.*

Act Four is laid in Don Juan's apartment:

Juan. However, it may be, leave it alone; it is a mere trifle, and we may have been deceived by a false light, or by some swimming in the head which obscured our sight.

Sgan. Ah! sir, do not try to disbelieve what we both saw with our own eyes. There is nothing more real than that nod; and I have no doubt that Heaven, offended by your conduct, has wrought this miracle to convince you and to reclaim you from . . . .

Juan. Now listen, if you tease me any more with your absurd sermons, and say another word on that subject, I will call one of the servants for a leathern strap, have three or four people to hold you, and thrash you soundly. You understand me, do you?

Sgan. Perfectly, sir, perfectly. You explain yourself very clearly. You have that good point about you, that you do not beat about the bush, but say things with wonderful plainness.

Juan. Now, my supper, as quickly as possible. A chair, boy!

When a creditor, Dimanche, succeeds in entering the apartment, he is treated in the following manner:

Juan. Ah! Mr. Dimanche, come in, I beg. How delighted I am to see you, and how angry I am with my servants for having kept you waiting! I had given orders that nobody should be let in, but this order had nothing to do with you, and you have a right to find my doors always open.

Dim. Sir, I am much obliged to you.

Juan. (*speaking to* La Violette *and* Ragotin). 'Sdeath, scoundrels! I'll teach you to keep Mr. Dimanche waiting, and show you how to distinguish people.

Dim. It doesn't matter, sir.

Juan. (*to* Mr. Dimanche). What! to tell you that I am not at home! you, Mr. Dimanche, my best friend!

Dim. Sir, I thank you. I came . . . .

Juan. Quick! a seat for Mr. Dimanche.

Dim. Sir, I am very well as I am.

Juan. Not a bit—not a bit; I will have you take a seat near me.

Dim. It is not necessary.

Juan. Take away this stool, and bring an arm-chair.

Dim. Sir, you forgot; and . . . .

Juan. No, no; I know how much I am indebted to you, and I will have no difference made between us.

Dim. Sir . . . .

Juan. Come, sit down.

Dim. It is not necessary, sir, and I have only a word to say. I was . . . .

Juan. Sit down here, I say.

Dim. No; I am quite comfortable. I come for . .

Juan. No, I will not listen if you do not sit down.

Dim. Sir, to please you I will do so. I . . . .

Juan. Egad! Mr. Dimanche, how well you look!

Dim. Yes, sir, I am very well; at your service. I came . . . .

Juan. You look the picture of health: rosy lips, ruddy complexion, and sparkling eyes.

Dim. I should be glad to . . . .

Juan. And how is Mrs. Dimanche, your wife?

Dim. Very well, sir, thank Heaven.

Juan. She is a most excellent woman.

Dim. She is your humble servant, sir. I came . . . .

Juan. And your little girl Claudine, how is she?

Dim. As well as possible.

Juan. What a dear little girl she is! I love her with all my heart.

Dim. You do her too much honor, sir. I wanted you . . . .

Juan. And the little Colin, does he still make as much noise with his drum?

Dim. Always the same, sir. I . . . .

Juan. And your little dog Brusquet—does he growl as loud as ever, and does he still heartily bite the legs of those who go to your house?

Dim. More than ever, sir; and we hardly know what to do with him.

Juan. You must not be surprised if I ask after all your family; I feel the greatest interest in you all.

Dim. We are all greatly obliged to you, sir. I . . . .

Juan. (*holding out his hand*). Shake hands, then, Mr. Dimanche. Are you really one of my friends?

Dim. Sir, I am your humble servant.

Juan. Egad! I am yours with all my heart.

Dim. You do me too much honor. I . . . .

Juan. There is nothing I would not do for you.

Dim. Sir, you really are too kind.

Juan. And it is without any interested motives, I assure you.

Dim. I certainly have not deserved such a favor; but, sir . . . .

Juan. Now, Mr. Dimanche, without ceremony, have some supper with me.

Dim. No, sir, thank you; I must go back at once. I . . . .

Juan. (*rising*). Come, quick! A torch to light Mr. Dimanche, and let four or five of my people take their muskets to escort him.

Dim. (*rising also*). Sir, there is no need; I can very well go alone. But . . . .

(SGANARELLE *quickly takes the seats away.*)

Juan. No! I will have somebody go with you. I am too much interested in your person. I am your servant, and, what is more, your debtor.

Dim. Ah! sir . . . .

Juan. It is a thing I have no wish to hide, and I tell everybody of it.

Dim. If . . . .

Juan. Shall I go with you myself?

Dim. Ah! sir, you are laughing. Sir . . . .

Juan. Embrace me, then, pray. I ask you once more to consider me wholly yours, and to remember that there is nothing I would not do for you. [*Exit.*

Sgan. We must confess that you have in our master a man who loves you very much.

Dim. Yes, it is true; he is so civil, and pays me so many compliments, that I never dare ask him for any money.

Sgan. I assure you that his whole household would die

for you. I wish something would happen to you—that somebody tried to beat you—you would see in what way we . . . .

Dim. I believe it; but, Sganarelle, speak to him, I beg of you, a word or two about my money.

Sgan. Oh! never fear; he will pay you all right.

Dim. But you, Sganarelle, you also owe me something on your own account.

Sgan. Fie! don't speak of that.

Dim. How? I . . . .

Sgan. Don't I know what I owe you?

Dim. Yes; but . . . .

Sgan. Now, come, Mr. Dimanche, let me show you the way.

Dim. But my money?

Sgan. (*taking him by the arm*). You are laughing?

Dim. I wish . . . .

Sgan. (*pushing him*). Now, now.

Dim. I must . . . .

Sgan. (*pushing him towards the door*). Rubbish!

Dim. But . . . .

Sgan. (*pushing him again*). Fie!

Dim. I . . . .

Sgan. (*pushing him right out*). Fie! I say; fie!

Don Juan's father appears and bitterly reproaches his son, but is curtly dismissed. Sganarelle approves the act while facing Don Juan, and then bewails his own cowardice for submitting. Elvira, heavily veiled, enters, tells Don Juan that she no longer loves him, but that she is about to enter a convent, and in sympathy and pity for him begs him to reform, as he has but a single day to live. Don Juan scoffs at the idea of repentance, but the pathetic appearance of Elvira re-awakens some of his love, although she will not stay

with him or allow him to go with her. When Sganarelle and Don Juan sit down to their delayed supper, the statue appears, and to the consternation of both invites Don Juan to sup with him the following night. After a little hesitation, Don Juan boldly accepts the invitation, and says that he will bring Sganarelle.

The last act takes place in the country. Don Juan tells his father that he has reformed and will live a worthy life, and the forgiving parent leaves in great happiness. However, to Sganarelle Don Juan says that he has not repented in the least, but that he may do so in some twenty or thirty years from now, and what he intends to do hereafter is to pretend to have reformed, but to lead the same wicked life, for hypocrisy is the common dream of the age. Don Carlos appears and asks Don Juan to receive Elvira again and marry her publicly. He declines on the ground that he has reformed and that to interfere with Elvira's determination to enter the convent would be wrong. Don Carlos is not satisfied, but leaves when he has been told where he can meet his sister's seducer at another time. The play concludes:

Sgan. Sir, what is this new style you adopt? This is worse than all the rest put together; I had much rather see you as you were before. I always looked forward to your salvation before, but from henceforth I give up all hope, and I believe that Heaven, which has borne with you to this day, will never tolerate this last abomination.

Juan. Come, come; Heaven is not so strict as you think, and if each time that men . . . .

Enter a SPECTER *in the form of a veiled woman.*

Sgan. (*seeing the Specter*). Ah! sir, Heaven speaks to you and warns you.

Juan. This may be a warning from Heaven, but it must be expressed more clearly if I am to understand it.

Spec. Don Juan has but a moment longer to profit by the mercy of Heaven; if he does not repent now, his destruction is certain.

Sgan. Sir, do you hear?

Juan. Who dares speak such words to me? I think I know this voice.

Sgan. Ah! sir, it is a ghost. I know it by its way of walking.

Juan. Ghost, phantom, or devil, I will see what it is. (*The* SPECTER *changes shape, and represents Time with his scythe in his hand.*)

Sgan. O heavens! Do you see, sir, this change of shape?

Juan. No, no; nothing can terrify me, and my sword will tell me whether this is body or spirit.

(*The Specter disappears when* DON JUAN *tries to strike it.*)

Sgan. Ah! sir, yield to such repeated proofs.

Juan. No, whatever may happen, it shall never be said that I could repent. Come, follow me.

Enter the STATUE *of the Commandant*

Stat. Stop, Don Juan, you promised me yesterday to come and have supper with me.

Juan. Yes; where shall we go?

Sgan. Give me your hand.

Juan. Here it is.

Stat. Don Juan, obstinacy in sin brings after it a fearful death, and by rejecting the mercy of Heaven we open a way for its wrath.

Juan. Oh, heavens! what do I feel! an invisible fire consumes me, I can bear it no longer. My whole body is one ardent flame . . . . Oh! . . . . oh! . . . .

(*The lightning flashes around* DON JUAN, *and loud claps of thunder are heard. The earth opens and*

swallows him up. From the spot where he has disappeared burst forth flames of fire.)

Sgan. Ah! my wages! my wages! His death is a reparation to all. Heaven offended, laws violated, families dishonored, girls ruined, wives led astray, husbands driven to despair, everybody is satisfied. I am the only one to suffer. My wages, my wages, my wages!

VII. "TARTUFFE." Moliere presented the first three acts of *Tartuffe* (*The Hypocrite*) in May, 1664, before the King, but it created such a commotion that the public performance of it was prohibited, and it was not acted again until nearly two years later, when it met with great success and ran for forty-four nights, an unprecedented length of time in those days. In the second performance it appeared under the title *L'Imposteur* (*The Impostor*). The objection to it was not so much that it aimed at individuals but at a whole class, each of which fancied himself attacked. It was the fear of its influence against religion that caused its suppression.

As a work of art *Tartuffe* has always been admired, in spite of the bitter attacks that have been made upon it by society and religion. Heretofore, Moliere's satire had been in general kindly, but baseness, acting under the garb of religion, deserved, he felt, more caustic treatment. If it were considered solely as an attack against vice and hypocrisy, there could be no particular objection to the play, but it must be remembered that Moliere was personal and that those characters which we are

inclined to consider wholly imaginary were some of them promptly recognized by the public. *Don Juan* was as severe as *Tartuffe*, but as it lacked the personalities of the latter its production was never prohibited. It is interesting to notice in the early play how Moliere placates Louis by flattering allusions to him, and that in the last act the King himself appears as the *deus ex machina*.

The scene of *Tartuffe* is laid in Paris at the house of Orgon, which character Moliere acted at the first presentation. Madame Pernelle, the mother of Orgon, severely reproaches her daughter-in-law and her son's children for their frivolity, arguing that it is a fine thing that so holy a man as Tartuffe should be in their house. When they object to her criticisms and attack Tartuffe's character, she leaves them in anger, saying that it will be a long time before she darkens their doors again. More is said about Orgon's infatuation for Tartuffe and the extreme lengths to which he carries it, and Damis, Orgon's son, begs his uncle to intercede and promote the marriage of Valere to his betrothed, Marianne, the sister of Damis. When Orgon, who has been absent, returns, the following scene occurs between him, Cleante, his brother-in-law, and Dorine, Marianne's lively maid:

Org. Ah! good morning, brother.
Cle. I was just going away, but I am glad to see you back. The fields are not very green just now, are they?
Org. Dorine . . . . (*to* CLEANTE) Brother, pray

excuse me; you will kindly allow me to allay my anxiety by asking news of the family. (*to* DORINE) Has everything gone on well these last two days? What has happened? How is everybody?

Dor. The day before yesterday our mistress was very feverish from morning to night, and suffered from a most extraordinary headache.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Tartuffe! He is wonderfully well, stout and fat, with blooming cheeks and ruddy lips.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. In the evening she felt very faint, and the pain in her head was so great that she could not touch anything at supper.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. He ate his supper by himself before her; and very devoutly devoured a brace of partridges and half a leg of mutton hashed!

Org. Poor man!

Dor. She spent the whole of the night without getting one wink of sleep; she was very feverish, and we had to sit up with her until the morning.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Overcome by a pleasant sleepiness he passed from the table to his room, and got at once into his warmed bed, where he slept comfortably till the next morning.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. At last yielding to our persuasions, she consented to be bled, and immediately felt relieved.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. He took heart right valiantly, and fortifying his soul against all evils, to make up for the blood which our lady had lost, drank at breakfast four large bumpers of wine.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. Now at last, they are both well; and I will go and tell our lady how glad you are to hear of her recovery.

Cleante remonstrates, and the scene continues after Dorine has gone out:

Org. Brother, you would be delighted with him if you knew him, and you would never get over your wonder. He is a man who . . . . ah! a man . . . . in short, a man. Whoever carefully follows his precepts lives in most profound peace, and all the rest of the world is but dross to him. Yes, I am quite another man since I became acquainted with him. He teaches me to have no affection for anybody, he detaches my heart from all the ties of this world; and I should see my brother, children, mother, and wife die, without caring about it.

Cle. Humane feelings these, brother!

Org. Ah! if you had only seen him when I first met him you would feel for him the same love that I have. He came every day to church, and with gentle looks knelt down straight before me on both his knees. He attracted the attention of the whole congregation by the ardor with which, wrapped in saintly ecstasy, he sent up his prayer to Heaven. He sighed deeply, and every moment humbly kissed the ground. When I went out, he would steal quickly before me to offer me holy water at the door. Having heard through his servant, who imitates him in everything, of his poverty and who he is, I made him small presents, but he, with the greatest modesty, always returned me part of it: "It is too much," he would say, "too much by half, I do not deserve your pity;" and when I refused to take it back again, he went, before my eyes, to distribute it to the poor. At last Heaven moved me to take him into my house, and since then everything has been prospering here. I see that he reproves everything, and, with regard to my wife, takes extreme care of my honor. He warns me of the people who cast loving eyes upon her, and is a dozen times more jealous of her than I am. You would never believe how far he carries his pious zeal. He accuses himself of sin for the slightest thing imaginable; a mere trifle is enough to shock him; so

much so, that the other day he blamed himself for having caught a flea while at his prayers, and for having killed it with too much wrath.

Cle. You are crazy, brother, I believe! Are you laughing at me with such stuff? What is it you mean? All this foolery . . . .

Org. Brother, what you say savors of freethinking; you are somewhat tainted with it; and, as I have told you again and again, you will draw some heavy judgment upon your head.

Cle. Tut! This is the usual way of talking with such as you. They want everybody to be as blind as they are; to see clearly is to be a freethinker; and not to worship empty show is to act from a want of faith and of respect for holy things. Believe me, all your denunciations do not frighten me; I know what I say, and God sees my heart. I am no dupe of all your formalists. Devotion, like courage, has its pretenders; and in the same way that the truly brave are not those who make the most noise where honor leads them, so the real and truly pious men whose example we ought to follow, are not those who affect such grimaces. What! will you make no distinction between hypocrisy and true religion? Will you call them both by the same name, and render the same homage to the mask as to the face? Will you put on the same level falsehood and sincerity, and confound appearance with reality? Will you esteem the shadow as much as the substance, and false coin as much as good? Men are really strange beings; they never keep to simple nature. The bounds of reason seem too narrow for them, and in every character they over-act their parts; they often spoil even the noblest thing by exaggeration. This to yourself, by the way, brother.

Org. Yes, you are doubtless a doctor revered by all; all the knowledge of the world has taken its abode in you; you are the only wise and enlightened man,—the oracle, the Cato of the present age; and all men compared to you are fools.

Cle. No, I am not a revered doctor, brother; no, all the knowledge of this world has not found its abode in me. I have merely the science of discerning truth from falsehood. And as I know nothing in the world so noble and so beautiful as the holy fervor of genuine piety, so there is nothing, I think, so odious as the whitewashed outside of a specious zeal; as those downright impostors, whose sacrilegious and deceitful grimaces impose on others with impunity, and who trifle as they like with all that mankind holds sacred; those men who, wholly given to mercenary ends, trade upon godliness, and would purchase honor and reputation at the cost of hypocritical looks and affected groans; who are passionate, revengeful, faithless, full of deceit, and who, to work the destruction of a fellow-man, insolently cover their fierce resentment with the cause of Heaven. There are too many such mean hypocrites in the world; but from them the truly pious are easy to distinguish. Our age offers us abundant and glorious examples, my brother. They do not trust to the appearance of evil, and are more inclined to judge kindly of others. We find no cabals, no intrigues among them; all their anxiety is to live a holy life. They never persecute the sinner, but they hate the sin. They do not care to display for the interest of Heaven a more ardent zeal than Heaven itself displays. These are people after my own heart; it is thus we should live; this is the pattern for us to follow. Tartuffe is not of this stamp, I know. You speak with the best intention of his goodness, but I fear you are dazzled by false appearances.

Org. Well, my dear brother, have you done?

Cle. Yes.

Org. (*going*). I am your servant.

Cle. Pray, one word more. Let us drop this discussion. You know that Valere has your promise to be your son-in-law?

Org. Yes.

Cle. And that you had fixed a day for the wedding?

Org. True.
Cle. Why, then, do you put off the ceremony?
Org. I don't know.
Cle. Have you any other project in your mind?
Org. Perhaps.
Cle. Would you break your word?
Org. I don't say that.
Cle. You have no reason, I think, to prevent you from fulfilling your promise?
Org. That depends.
Cle. Valere has asked me to speak to you on the subject.
Org. Heaven be praised for that!
Cle. But what answer shall I give him?
Org. Any answer you please.
Cle. Still, we ought to know your intentions. What are they?
Org. To do Heaven's will.
Cle. Let us speak reasonably. You gave your word to Valere; will you or will you not keep it?
Org. Good-bye. [*Exit.*
Cle. (alone). I greatly fear some misfortune for his love. I must go and tell him of all that is going on.

Act Two begins with Orgon telling Marianne that she must marry Tartuffe, but Dorine teases her master to anger over the absurdity of the proposition. After he has gone, she rallies Marianne on her weakness and persuades her to stand up against her father's decision. Then the lovers quarrel over Tartuffe, and the act concludes as follows:

Dor. (*to* MARIANNE). I really believe you are crazy, with all this nonsense. I have left you to quarrel as much as you pleased, so as to see how far you would go.—I say, Mr. Valere! (*She stops* VALERE *by the arm.*)
Val. (*affecting to resist*). Well, what do you want, Dorine?

Dor. Come here.

Val. No, no, I feel too indignant. Do not stop me, since she wishes it.

Dor. Stop.

Val. No, my mind is quite made up.

Dor. Ah!

Mar. (*aside*). He hates the sight of me; my presence drives him away, and I shall do well to free him from it. (*Is going.*)

Dor. (*letting go of* VALERE *and running after* MARIANNE). The other, now. Where are you going?

Mar. Leave me.

Dor. You must come back.

Mar. No, no, Dorine, it is in vain for you to keep me.

Val. (*aside*). I see plainly that my presence is hateful to her, and it is better that I should free her from it.

Dor. (*letting go of* MARIANNE *to run after* VALERE). Again! Plague you both!—Come, I will have it so. Cease all this fooling, and come here, both of you (*She holds them both.*)

Val. (*to* DORINE). But what is it you want?

Mar. (*to* DORINE). But what do you mean?

Dor. To set you all right again, and to help you out of your troubles. (*to* VALERE) Are you mad, to have such a quarrel?

Val. Did you not hear how she spoke to me?

Dor. (*to* MARIANNE). Have you lost your senses, you, to get into such a passion?

Mar. Did you not see how it all happened, and how he treated me?

Dor. You are a silly couple. (*to* VALERE) She has no greater anxiety than to keep faithful to you. (*to* MARIANNE) You are the only one he loves, and he asks for nothing else than to marry you; I'll answer for it.

Mar. (*to* VALERE). Why, then, give me such advice?

Val. (*to* MARIANNE). Why, also ask me for one on such a matter.

Dor. You are absurd, both of you. (*to* VALERE) Come, your hand. (*to* MARIANNE) Now, yours.

Val. (*giving his hand to* DORINE). Why my hand?

Mar. (*also giving her hand*). What is the use of all this?

Dor. Come, come quickly, come on; you love each other more than you think. (VALERE *and* MARIANNE *hold each other's hand for a while without looking at each other.*)

Val. (*turning to* MARIANNE). Don't do things too much against your will, and give a man a civil look. (MARIANNE *turns round to* VALERE *and smiles.*)

Dor. Now, really, lovers are very foolish.

Val. (*to* MARIANNE). Have I not a right to complain of you? And, to say the least, are you not very unkind to take pleasure in saying such a cruel thing to me?

Mar. But are you not also the most ungrateful lover . . . .

Dor. Let us leave all that aside for another time, and think of what we can do to ward off this marriage.

Mar. Tell us what means we must make use of?

Dor. We'll try everything. (*to* MARIANNE) Your father is absurd, (*to* VALERE) and it is ridiculous. (*to* MARIANNE) But you, the best you can do is to seem to acquiesce willingly in his wish; for, in case of alarm, it would be easier for you to put off this marriage. When we gain time we can find remedies for anything. Sometimes you will complain of sudden illness; that will necessitate a delay; at another you will bring forward some evil omens—either that you have met a dead body, have broken a looking-glass, or have dreamt of muddy water. But the best resource of all is that they cannot possibly make you his wife unless you say "Yes." However, if we mean our plans to be successful, the best thing for the present is, I think, for us not to be found talking together. (*to* VALERE) Go away at once; make use of your friends to force her father to keep the promise he made to you. We will, on our side, ask his brother to act with us, and gain the mother-in-law to our side. Good-bye.

Val. (*to* MARIANNE). Whatever we may all do, my greatest hope is really in you.

Mar. (*to* VALERE). I cannot answer for the will of my father, but I will never belong to any one but Valere.

Val. Ah! how happy you make me! And, whatever they dare . . . .

Dor. Ah me! lovers are never tired of talking! You must be off, I tell you.

Val. (*goes and comes back*). In short . . . .

Dor. What length of tongue! You go, sir, that way and you, miss, this. (DORINE *pushes them both away and forces them to separate.*)

Dorine advises Damis to be calm and to enlist the interest of his step-mother, who dislikes Tartuffe, but seems to have some power over him. Elmire, the wife of Orgon, interviews Tartuffe, who makes violent love to her. She rejects all his advances, but promises to say nothing to any one if he will favor the marriage of Marianne to Valere. Damis, who has overheard the conversation, declares he will expose everything to Orgon, and when the latter enters the son keeps his word. However, Tartuffe's fawning humility convinces Orgon that his son is false, and the hypocrite is restored to an even higher position than ever in the heart of the master of the house. Damis is driven out and disinherited. Tartuffe is promised the hand of Marianne and the inheritance of all Orgon's estate.

Cleante's expostulation with Tartuffe at the beginning of Act Four fails, and the latter refuses to try to bring Damis back or to reject Orgon's wealth. Marianne implores her father not to make her marry Tartuffe, and his wife joins in the plea; but the blinded man accuses

her of exaggeration and is deaf to all her charges. She, however, offers to interview Tartuffe again and prove by his actions that she has not exaggerated in her story of Tartuffe's deeds. Orgon consents, and, following his wife's plan, allows himself to be concealed under the table. Tartuffe comes in, and his actions are so unrestrained that Orgon is convinced of his hypocrisy and in a stormy scene orders Tartuffe from the house. It then appears that Orgon has already deeded everything to Tartuffe.

Act Five opens with Orgon railing against Tartuffe, but Cleante chides him:

> Just like you! Now we have another fit of excess: you never keep within bounds in anything; you never listen to healthy common sense, and always rush from one extreme to another. You see your mistake and acknowledge that you were deceived by a false appearance of piety; but to make up for this, what necessity is there to be guilty of a worse mistake? Why should you make no difference between the heart of a rascally villain and that of every good man? Because a scoundrel has shamelessly imposed upon you under the solemn mask of austerity, must you go and fancy that everybody is like him, and that there are no sincere people in the world? Leave such inferences to unbelievers; distinguish virtue from its appearance; never be too hasty in giving your esteem, and avoid either extreme. Keep, if you can, from doing homage to imposture, but at the same time do not injure true piety. And if you must lean towards one extreme, better to offend as you already have done.

It appears that Tartuffe would dispossess Orgon and his mother, who tries unsuccessfully

to conciliate her son and to defend the hypocrite. Loyal, a bailiff, enters with an order to dispossess Orgon, but promises to leave the latter in possession till morning, providing he and ten of his men are allowed to sleep in the house that night. However, Orgon must deliver up the keys and have everything ready to move out in the morning. It seems that Orgon has given to Tartuffe certain papers disclosing state secrets and that Tartuffe has made these public, so that Orgon is in danger of arrest. All now are convinced of Tartuffe's rascality, and when he enters with a police officer and refuses any compromise, Orgon and all the rest are in terror, but the *denouement* is made in the following manner, highly complimentary to King Louis:

Tar. (*to the* OFFICER). I beg of you, sir, to deliver me from all this noise, and to act according to the orders you have received.

Officer. I have certainly put off too long the discharge of my duty, and you very rightly remind me of it. To execute my order, follow me immediately to the prison in which a place is assigned to you.

Tar. Who? I, sir?

Officer. Yes, you.

Tar. Why to prison?

Officer. To you I have no account to render. (*to* ORGON) Pray, sir, recover from your great alarm. We live under a King who is an enemy to fraud; a King who can read the heart, and whom all the arts of impostors cannot deceive. His great mind, endowed with delicate discernment, at all times sees things in their true light. He is never betrayed into exaggeration, and his sound reason knows not excess. On men of worth

he bestows immortal glory; but he dispenses his favors without blindness, and his love for the truly great does not prevent him from feeling the horror which the vicious must inspire. This man had no chance of deceiving him, for he has pierced through more subtle snares. His clear insight enabled him at once to discover the baseness of his heart. Coming to accuse you, he betrayed himself, and by the evenhanded justice of supreme equity discovered himself to be a notorious rascal, of whom, under another name, the King had already received information. His life is a long list of dark deeds, and would fill volumes. Our King, in a word, abhorring his base ingratitude and dishonesty towards you, has added it to his other crimes, and has placed me under his orders only to see how far his impudence would carry him, and to oblige him to give you full satisfaction. Yes, he has ordered me to take away from him, before you, all the documents he says he has of yours. He annuls, by his sovereign will, the terms of the contract by which you give him your property. He moreover forgives you this secret offense in which you were involved by the flight of your friend. This to reward the zeal which you once showed for him in maintaining his rights, and to prove that his heart, when it is least expected, knows how to recompense a good action. Merit with him is never lost, and he remembers good better than evil.

VIII. "Le Misanthrope." Many consider this to be Moliere's masterpiece. It was played for the first time in June, 1666, at the Theater of the Palais Royal, Moliere acting the part of Alceste and his wife that of Celimene. Moliere himself had by this time became somewhat embittered by his public warfare and his private griefs, and saw more vividly, perhaps, the sorriness of that world, with which, however, he felt that he must still

keep on friendly terms. To how great an extent his characters were real, we can scarcely conjecture, but it is interesting to remember that when Alceste says to Celimene, "Alas! why do I love you so much? Oh! if ever I free my heart from this thraldom, I will bless Heaven for my rare good fortune! I do not wish to hide it from you; I do all I can to tear from my heart this terrible fondness, but my most strenuous efforts have failed hitherto. It is for my sins that I love you thus," Moliere is speaking face to face to his wife. Moliere is now dealing with those frailties of the human heart which are universal and which belong to all time, and no longer with the absurdities and mannerisms of his own age. This is one of the best of comedies in any language, for it delineates character truly, is filled with noble thoughts and expressed in almost perfect style. The scene is laid in Paris, at the house of Celimene, whose lover, Alceste, is the misanthrope. Alceste, morbidly conscious of the hypocrisy of exaggerated affection, declares that he wants none of the friendship of Philinte:

Alc. No, I cannot endure this contemptible custom affected by most of you men of fashion, and there is nothing I hate so much as the grimaces of all those great protestation-mongers, those obsequious dealers of unmeaning embraces, those obliging utterers of empty words, who vie with each other in civilities, and treat in the same manner the honorable man and the vain fool. What advantage do you find in being the object of the endearments of a man who makes vows

to you of friendship, faith, zeal, esteem, tenderness; who crushes you with promises; who bestows on you a brilliant encomium; when he rushes to do the same to the first snob he meets? No, no one who respects himself would care for esteem so debased; and even that which we most prize has little value if it includes the whole human race. Friendship should be based on esteem, but to esteem everybody is to esteem nobody. Since you yield to these vices of the age, 'sdeath! I will have nothing to do with you. I utterly reject the condescending affability which makes no distinctions of merit. I wish to be loved for myself; and, to cut the matter short, the friend of all mankind is no friend of mine.

Phil. But while we are in the world, we must pay a few outward civilities which custom demands.

Alc. No, I tell you; we should pitilessly condemn this shameful display of hollow friendships. I would have every one acquit himself like a man; under every circumstance speak his mind freely, and never allow his real feelings to disguise themselves under vain compliments.

Phil. There are many cases when unreserved frankness would be both ridiculous and objectionable; and sometimes,—no offense to your austere honor,—it is right to conceal the thoughts we have. Would it be proper and befitting to tell a hundred people about us, what we think of them? And when we have to do with a man we hate, or who displeases us, ought we to go and tell him the plain facts of the case?

Alc. Yes.

Phil. What! you would tell that ancient dame, Emilia, that at her age it is not becoming to set up for a beauty, and that the paint she lays on, shocks everybody?

Alc. Certainly.

Phil. You would tell Dorilas that he is too importunate, and that every one at Court is tired of hearing him relate his own deeds of bravery, and speak of the greatness of his house?

Alc. Decidedly.

Phil. You are joking.

Alc. I am not; and on this point I will spare no one. My eyes are too much offended, and, whether at Court or in town, I find only objects to provoke my wrath. To see men behave as they do makes me a prey to melancholy and deep grief. I find everywhere nothing but base flattery, injustice, self-interest, treachery, and deceit. I can bear it no longer, and my intention is to break with all mankind.

The discussion continues, and finally Alceste says:

No, there are no exceptions, and I hate all men alike. Some, because they are wicked and mischievous; others, because they are lenient towards the wicked, and do not bear to them that deep contempt which vice ought to inspire in honest hearts. You can see to what an unjust excess this toleration is carried in the case with that downright villain, against whom I have a lawsuit. Everybody can see through the mask of the treacherous rascal; he is known everywhere for what he is; and his soft looks and honied words only deceive those to whom he is a stranger. Every one knows that this abject scoundrel, who deserves to be exposed, has pushed his way in the world through mean and dirty jobs; and that the lofty position to which these have brought him, makes merit repine and virtue blush. Whatever shameful epithets you may apply to him, there is no one to take up the defense of his wretched honor; call him infamous cheat, and cursed villain: every one agrees to it, and nobody contradicts you; yet his face is everywhere welcome; he is received and entertained everywhere; people smile upon him; he worms himself into every society; and if by canvassing there is any preferment to be competed for, you will see him carry it off over the heads of the most honest. 'Sdeath! this tampering with vice kills me, and I am seized at times with a terrible longing to fly away into some desert, far from the approach of men.

The remonstrances of Philinte avail nothing, nor his assertions that the world will laugh at Alceste for his crabbed feelings. The latter is engaged in a lawsuit, but declares that he will make no defense nor attempt to influence the judges, for he relies on the righteousness of his case and will test the justice of men. Philinte asks him why he loves the maliciously witty and coquettish Celimene, when her cousin, the sincere Eliante, and her friend, the prudish but true Arsinoe, are both in love with him. He replies that he loves Celimene because she loves him, and in spite of her faults, which he well knows. Oronte, a lover of Celimene's, appears and with excessive flattery asks the friendship of Alceste, who says:

> Sir, it is too great an honor you wish to pay me; but friendship requires a little more caution, and we surely profane its name when we lightly make use of it. Such a compact ought to spring from judgment and choice, and before we bind ourselves we ought to be better acquainted. Our dispositions might differ so greatly as to make us both heartily repent of the bargain.

Oronte submits a sonnet to the criticism of Alceste, who indirectly snubs the author, ridicules his work and advises him to stop writing. A serious quarrel is barely averted by Philinte, and as a result Alceste is much incensed at the peacemaker.

In the second act Alceste is jealous of Celimene, who cleverly defends herself in a long conversation which is almost a quarrel. Some of her friends appear, and Alceste wishes them

sent away. When she refuses, his jealousy increases, but the party continue their gossip about their acquaintances, in which Celimene is exceedingly caustic and very bright. Alceste interrupts, makes himself ridiculous by his jealousy and fault-finding, and declares that he will remain till all the others have gone. He is taken away, however, by an officer of the Court of Honor, in consequence of his quarrel with Oronte.

In the lively dialogue which opens the third act, Acaste and Clitandre, two marquises, decide that if one can show proof that Celimene prefers him to the other, the defeated shall withdraw. Celimene rails against the jealousy and prudishness of Arsinoe, but when the latter enters, treats her with hypocritical kindness. In the garb of friendly advice, Arsinoe insults Celimene by telling her what people say of her, and the latter retaliates in kind:

Celi. Madam, I have many thanks to return to you, and such advice lays me under great obligation. Far from taking it unkindly, I am only too anxious at once to prove my gratitude by giving you on my part a certain piece of advice, which, wonderful to say, closely concerns your honor; and as I see you prove yourself my friend by informing me of the reports that people spread about me, I wish, in my turn, to follow so pleasing an example by acquainting you with what is said of you. In a certain house, where I was visiting the other day, I met with people of the most striking merit; and they, speaking of the duties of a person who leads a virtuous life, turned the conversation, madam, upon you. There, your prudishness and the vehemence of your zeal were by no means quoted as

a good example. That affectation of a grave demeanor; your everlasting speeches on discretion and honor; your simpering, and your outcries at the shadow of any impropriety which an innocent though ambiguous word may present; the high esteem in which you hold yourself, and the looks of pity you cast upon others; your frequent lectures and your sharp censures on things which are harmless and pure; all this, madam, if I may speak the plain truth, was blamed by common accord. "What signify," said they, "that modest mien and that grave manner, which are belied by all the rest? She is most exact at all her prayers, but she beats her servants and pays them no wages. She makes the greatest display of fervor in all places of worship, but she paints and wishes to appear beautiful. She has all nudities covered in her pictures, but she delights in the reality." For my part, I undertook your defense against every one, and assured them it was all calumny; but the general opinion went against me, and the conclusion was that you would do well to be less solicitous about other people's actions and take more pains about your own; that we should examine ourselves a great deal before thinking of condemning others; that we ought to add the weight of an exemplary life to the corrections we pretend to make in our neighbors; and that, after all, it would be better still to leave that care to those who were ordained by Heaven for it. Madam, I believe that you also are too sensible not to take in good part this kindly-meant advice, and not to attribute it to the earnestness of an affection which makes me anxious for your welfare.

Ars. Whatever we may be exposed to when we admonish another, I was not prepared, madam, for such a retort as this; and I can see, by the bitterness of your speech, that my sincere advice has hurt your feelings.

Celi. On the contrary, madam, if the world were wise, it would bring these mutual counsels into fashion. Sincerity in such a course of action would help to

destroy that over-estimation of our own merit which we all have. It depends entirely on you, madam, for us two to continue this kindly office with equal zeal on both sides, and to take great care to repeat what we hear: you of me, I of you.

Ars. Ah! madam, I can hear nothing to your disadvantage; it is only in me that there is so much to reprove.

Celi. Madam, my belief is that we may praise or blame everything; and that everything is right according to age and taste. These is a time for gallantry, and a time for prudery. We may adopt the latter out of policy, when the glorious freshness of our youth has left us; it covers much vexatious neglect. I am not at all sure but that I shall follow your example some day. Age will bring about many changes; but it is not the time, madam, as you will acknowledge, to play the prude at twenty.

Ars. You boast of a very trifling advantage, madam, and you proclaim your age very loudly. The difference there may be between yours and mine is not so very great for you to make so much of it, and I do not know why you give way to so passionate an outburst and abuse me so unmercifully.

The argument is terminated by the arrival of Alceste and the departure of Celimene. Arsinoe flatters him and gives him her sympathy, because, as she says, Celimene is false to him. He doubts the assertion, and Arsinoe offers to prove the charge.

At the beginning of the fourth act Philinte describes the reconciliation of Alceste and Oronte:

Phil. No, never was there a more unbending disposition, nor a reconciliation more difficult to bring about. In vain were all means tried to make Alceste alter his mind, nothing could make him change his first opinion,

and never had so whimsical a quarrel, I believe, called forth all the discretion of those gentlemen.—"No, gentlemen," said he, "I cannot retract what I have said, and I am ready to agree to anything except to this. What is he so exasperated about, and what can he want of me? Is his glory at stake because he cannot write well? What need has he of my opinion which he has taken amiss? He may be a perfect gentleman, and yet write bad verses. Honor is in no way concerned in such matters; I think him an honorable man in every way; a man of noble birth, of merit and of courage, anything you please—but a very bad author notwithstanding. I will praise, if you wish me, his mode of living, his munificence, his skill in riding, fencing and dancing; but as to praising his verses—I am his humble servant, and I repeat that when we cannot write better, we should avoid writing altogether, unless, indeed, we are condemned to it under pain of death." In short, the only conciliatory measure to which he at last yielded with extreme difficulty, was to say, greatly softening his tone as he thought, "Sir, I am sorry to be so difficult to please; and out of regard for you, I wish with all my heart that I had been able to think your sonnet better." Thereupon they quickly made them end the whole proceeding with an embrace.

Eli. He certainly behaves very strangely at times, but I own that I hold him in great esteem, and the sincerity he glories in has in it something noble and heroic. It is a rare virtue in our days, and I could wish to see everybody possess it as he does.

Phil. As for me, the more I know him the more astonished I am at the passion to which he is a slave. With such a disposition, I cannot understand that he should ever have taken into his head to love, and still less how your cousin should be the person of his choice.

Eli. It shows that it is not always conformity of disposition which brings people together, and all those stories of love springing out of sympathy are belied by this example.

Phil. But do you think, from what we can see, that he is loved in return here?

Eliante confesses that if Celimene finally rejects Alceste, he may find a more faithful lover in herself, but Philinte protests that he wishes to sue for her hand as soon as he learns that she is disappointed in Alceste. He enters in despair:

Alc. Ah, madam! avenge me for an offense which has triumphed over all my constancy.

Eli. What is it? What can disturb you so much?

Alc. I cannot think of it, it is death to me, and the overthrow of all creation would not crush me like this terrible blow. It is all over with me . . . . my love . . . . I cannot speak.

Eli. Try to calm yourself a little; tell me . . . .

Alc. Ah, just Heaven! can the odious vices of the basest of minds be joined to such beauty?

Eli. But pray, what can . . . .

Alc. Ah! all is over, I am . . . . I am betrayed . . . . I feel crushed; Celimene—would you believe it?—Celimene is faithless; Celimene has deceived me!

Eli. Have you any just grounds for believing it?

Phil. Perhaps you are too hasty in your suspicions, and your jealous temper sometimes gives rise to strange fancies . . . .

Alc. Ah! 'sdeath, sir! mind your own business. (*to* ELIANTE) It is proof enough of her perfidy to have here in my possession a letter in her own handwriting; a letter to Oronte, which has put before my eyes in a moment my disgrace and her shame—Oronte, whose attentions I thought she avoided, and of all my rivals I feared the least.

Phil. A letter may sometimes deceive, and not be so guilty as we may at first judge from appearances.

Alc. Once more, sir, leave me alone, pray, and trouble yourself about your own affairs.

Eli. You must moderate your sorrow, and the insult . . . .

Alc. Let this be your share, madam. To you I have now recourse; it is you alone who can comfort me in this my cruel sorrow. Avenge me on an ungrateful and deceitful relative, who basely betrays such constant love; avenge me for this injury, which must seem hateful to you.

Eli. I avenge you! But how?

Alc. By accepting my love. Take possession of my heart; it is only thus that I can revenge myself upon her. I shall punish her by making her a witness of my sincere attachment, of my profound love, of the respectful cares, earnest devotion, and constant attentions which my heart will henceforth offer to none but you.

Eli. I sympathize deeply with you in your suffering, and I do not despise the love you offer me; still, the wrong may not be so great as you imagine, and you may wish to recall this desire for revenge. When the injury proceeds from one whom we really love, we indulge at first in many schemes which are soon forgotten. In vain do we see powerful reasons to break off the engagement; a guilty charmer is soon thought innocent, and all the harm we wished her, easily vanishes. Every one knows what is the anger of a lover.

Alc. No, no, madam, no! the offense is too great; I cannot relent, and I must part from her. Nothing could now change the resolution I have taken, and I should think myself base if ever I were to love her again. But she comes. My indignation increases at her approach. I will taunt her with her perversity, confound her with my words, and after that bring to you a heart free from her deceitful charms.

Exeunt PHILINTE, ELIANTE; *enter* CELIMENE.

Alc. O Heaven! may I control my just anger!

Celi. (*aside*). Ah! (*to* ALCESTE). What is this new

trouble I see you in? what mean those deep sighs and those dark looks you cast upon me?

Alc. That all the wickedness a soul is capable of can in nothing be compared to your perfidy; that fate, devils, and incensed Heaven never produced anything so worthless as yourself.

Celi. These are pretty speeches, which I certainly admire.

Alc. Ah! no more jesting; this is not a time for laughter. Rather let the blush of shame cover your face; you have cause, for your treachery is known. So the presentiments of my heart were true; its alarms were but too well founded, and those frequent suspicions which were thought odious were true guides to what my eyes have now seen. Yes, in spite of all your skill in dissimulation, Heaven hinted to me what I had to fear. But do not think that I shall bear this insult unavenged. I know that it is not in our power to govern our inclinations; that love is always spontaneous; that we cannot enter a heart by force, and that every heart is free to name its conqueror. I would not complain, therefore, if you had from the first spoken to me without dissembling; for, although you would have crushed within me the very springs of my life, I should have blamed my fate alone for it. But to think that my love was encouraged by you! It is such a treacherous, such a perfidious action, that no punishment seems too great for it. After such an outrage, fear everything from me; I am no longer master of myself; anger has conquered me. Pierced to the heart by the cruel blow with which you kill me, my senses are not overswayed by reason; I yield myself up to a just revenge, and I cannot answer for what I may do.

Celi. What can have called forth such an insult? Have you lost all sense and judgment? Pray speak!

Alc. Yes, when on seeing you I drank in the poison which is killing me; yes, when like a fool I thought I had found some sincerity in those treacherous charms that have deceived me.

Celi. Of what treachery are you complaining?

Alc. Ah! false heart, how well you feign ignorance! But I will leave you no loophole of escape! Look at your own handwriting; this letter is sufficient to confound you; against such evidence you can have nothing to answer.

Celi. So this is the cause of your strange outburst.

Alc. And you do not blush at the sight?

Celi. There is no occasion for me to blush.

Alc. What! will you add audacity to your deceit? Will you disown this letter because it is not signed?

Celi. Why should I disown it, when it is mine?

Alc. And you can look at it without being ashamed of the crime of which it shows you to be guilty towards me?

Celi. You are, in truth, a most foolish man.

Alc. What! you face thus calmly this all-convincing proof? And the tenderness you show in it for Oronte, has it nothing that can outrage me or shame you?

Celi. Oronte! who told you that this letter is for him?

Alc. Those who, to-day, put it in my hands. But suppose I grant that it is for another, have I less cause to complain? and would you be, in fact, less guilty towards me?

Celi. But if the letter was written to a woman, in what can it hurt you, and what guilt is there in it?

Alc. Ah! the evasion is excellent, and the excuse admirable! I must acknowledge that I did not expect such deceit, and I am not altogether convinced. What! do you dare to have recourse to such base tricks? Do you think people entirely devoid of understanding? Show me a little in what way you can maintain such a palpable falsehood, and how you can apply to a woman all the words which in this letter convey so much tenderness. In order to cover your infidelity, reconcile if you can what I am going to read to . . . .

Celi. No, I will not. What right have you to assume such authority, to dare tell such things to my face?

Alc. No, no, instead of giving way to anger, try to explain to me the expressions you use here.

Celi. I shall do nothing of the kind, and what you think on the subject matters very little to me.

Alc. For pity's sake, show me, and I shall be satisfied, that this letter can be explained to be meant for a woman.

Celi. It is for Oronte; there! and I will have you believe it. I receive all his attentions gladly. I admire what he says; I like his person, and I admit whatever you please. Do as you like, take your own course, let nothing stop you, and annoy me no more.

Alc. (*aside*). O heavens! can anything more cruel be invented; and was ever a heart treated in such a manner? What! I am justly incensed against her, I come to complain, and I must bear the blame! She excites my grief and my suspicion to the utmost. She wishes me to believe everything, she boasts of everything; and yet my heart is cowardly enough not to break the bonds that bind it, cowardly enough not to arm itself with deserved contempt for the cruel one it, alas! loves too much. (*to* CELIMENE) Ah! faithless woman, you well know how to take advantage of my weakness, and to make the deep yearning love I have for you serve your own ends. Clear yourself at least of a crime which overwhelms me with grief, and cease to affect to be guilty towards me. Show me, if you can, that this letter is innocent; strive to appear faithful to me, and I will strive to believe you.

Celi. Believe me, you forget yourself in your jealous fits, and you do not deserve all the love I feel for you. I should like to know what could compel me to condescend to the baseness of dissembling with you; and why, if my heart were engaged to another, I should not frankly tell you so. What! does not the kind assurance of my feelings towards you, plead my defense against all your suspicions? Have they any weight before such a pledge? Do you not insult me when you give way to them? And since it requires so great an effort

for us to speak our love; since the honor of our sex, that enemy to love, so strictly forbids such a confession, should the lover who sees us for his sake conquer such obstacles, think lightly of that testimony, and go unpunished? Is he not to blame if he does not trust what we have confessed with so much reluctance? Indeed, my indignation should be the reward of such doubts, and you do not deserve that I should care for you. I am very foolish, and am vexed at my own folly for still retaining any good-will towards you. I ought to place my affections elsewhere, and thus give you just excuse for complaint.

Alc. Ah, faithless woman! How wonderful is my weakness for you! You deceive me, no doubt, with such endearing words. But let it be; I must submit to my destiny; I give myself heart and soul to you. I trust you. I will to the end see what your heart will prove to be, and if it can be cruel enough to deceive me.

Celi. No; you do not love me as you ought to love.

Alc. Ah! nothing can be compared with my exceeding great love; and in my anxiety to make the whole world a witness to it, I even go so far as to form wishes against you. Yes, I could wish that no one thought you charming; that you were reduced to a humbler lot; that Heaven, at your birth, had bestowed nothing upon you; that you had neither rank, high birth, nor wealth, so that my heart in offering itself, might make up for the injustice of such a fate, and that I might have both the happiness and the glory on that day of seeing you owe everything to my love.

Celi. This is wishing me well after a strange sort. May Heaven spare me from your ever having an opportunity . . . . But here comes Mr. Dubois in strange attire.

Dubois, Alceste's servant, enters in great alarm and tells his master that he must fly at once, as he is in danger of arrest, and the latter goes out to ascertain the cause of the alarm.

The fifth act opens thus:

Alc. It is of no use; my resolution is taken.

Phil. But, however terrible this blow may be to you, must it force you to . . . .

Alc. No, you labor in vain, and in vain try to argue. Nothing can now deter me from my project; too much perversity reigns in our age, and I am resolved to avoid in future all intercourse with men. What! every one sees that honor, probity, decency, and the laws are all against my adversary, men publish the justice of my cause, and my mind trusts to the certainty of my right! Yet in the end I am defeated! I have justice on my side, and I lose my cause! A miserable scoundrel, whose shameful history every one knows, comes off triumphantly, thanks to the blackest falsehood! All good faith yields to his perfidy! He cuts my throat and proves that he is right. The weight of his mean, hypocritical grimace is thrown into the balance, and justice kicks the beam. He gets a decree of court to crown his infamy; and not satisfied with the injury done to me, as there circulates in the world an abominable book, the mere reading of which would be blamable, and which deserves the strictest suppression, the paltry scoundrel has the impudence to proclaim me the author! Upon which Oronte is seen to mutter, and basely endeavors to support the calumny! Oronte, who is said at Court to be an honorable man, and to whom I have done no other wrong than to have told him the honest truth. Oronte, who comes to me in spite of myself, eagerly to ask my opinion on verses of his making; and because I speak to him frankly, and betray neither him nor the truth, he helps to crush me with an imaginary crime! He becomes my greatest enemy, and will never forgive me, because, forsooth! I could not find his sonnet good. 'Sdeath! and men are made thus! It is to such actions that glory leads them! This is the good faith, virtuous zeal, justice, and honor we find among them! No, it

is too much to endure all the sorrows their malice can devise against us; I will escape out of this wood, out of this cut-throat place; and since men behave like wolves to each other, the traitors shall never have me among them so long as I am alive.

Alceste combats every argument advanced by Philinte, is determined to retire from public life and to take Celimene with him:

Oron. Yes, madam, you are to consider whether by ties so sweet I am to be for ever yours. I must have a decided answer as to your feelings for me. A lover cannot tolerate any ambiguity on such a point. If my ardent affection has really touched your heart, you ought not to hesitate to tell me so; and after all, the proof I ask from you is the only wish that Alceste should, henceforth, no more pretend to your hand, that you should entirely give him up, and, in short, forbid him your house for ever.

Celi. But what can make you so angry with him? you whom I have heard speak so highly of him?

Oron. Madam, there is no need of these explanations; I only wish to know what your feelings are. Choose the one or the other; I am only waiting for your decision.

Alc. (*stepping forth*). Yes, this gentleman is right, madam, and you must choose; and his request entirely agrees with mine. The same impatience urges me, and the same anxiety brings me here. My love desires to receive from you an undoubted proof; the matter can be delayed no longer; the time has come for you to explain your feelings.

Oron. I have no wish, sir, that an importunate love should in any way interfere with your good fortune.

Alc. Sir, I do not wish, jealous or not jealous, to share her heart in anything with you.

Oron. If she can prefer your love to mine . . . .

Alc. If she possibly can have the least inclination for you . . . .

Oron. I swear to pretend no more to her.

Alc. And I emphatically swear no more to set eyes upon her.

Oron. Madam, it remains with you to speak without hesitation.

Alc. Madam, you can explain yourself without fear.

Oron. You have only to say which way your preference inclines.

Alc. You have nothing to do but to cut matters short and to choose between us.

Oron. What! you seem to find such a choice difficult!

Alc. What! you hesitate and appear undecided!

Celi. Gracious heavens! how importunate this persistence is, and how unreasonable you both are; my mind is made up, and my heart does not waver; it does not hesitate between you. Nothing is more easily decided than the choice love makes. But I feel great repugnance to make a declaration of this kind before you both. I think that disobliging words should not be spoken in the presence of witnesses, that our heart gives enough tokens of its inclination without our being forced to an open quarrel with every one, and that, in short, a lover should be given more gentle evidence of the ill-success of his attentions.

Oron. Not so, not so; I fear nothing from a frank avowal; on the contrary, as far as I am concerned, I wish for it.

Alc. And I demand it. It is an open declaration that I especially claim. I will not have any half measures. Your great study is how you can keep friends with everybody. But let us have no trifling, no more uncertainty; you must explain yourself openly, or else I shall take your refusal itself for a decision. I shall know, for my part, how to interpret your silence, and by it I shall understand the worst.

Oron. I am obliged to you, sir, for this anger, and I repeat all that you have said.

Celi. How you weary me with this caprice! Is there any common justice in what you ask of me? Have I

not told you what motive restrains me . . . .? But Eliante is coming; she shall judge.

Enter ELIANTE *and* PHILINTE

Celi. You see me here, cousin, persecuted by people who seem to have arranged their plans beforehand. Both, with the same peremptoriness, ask that I should declare the choice my heart has made; and that by a decision to be pronounced before them, I should forbid one of the two to continue his attentions. Tell me if such things are ever done?

Eli. Do not consult me upon such a matter; you may address yourself to the wrong person, and I am decidedly for those who speak their mind openly.

Oron. Madam, it is in vain for you to excuse yourself.

Alc. All you evasions will be but ill seconded here.

Oron. You must speak and decide.

Alc. You need only continue to be silent.

Oron. One word will be sufficient.

Alc. And I understand you even if you do not speak at all. [*Exit.*

Enter ARSINOE, ACASTE *and* CLITANDRE

Aca. (*to* CELIMENE). Madam, we come, with your permission, to try and clear up a certain trifling matter.

Clit. (*to* ORONTE *and* ALCESTE). You are right welcome here, gentlemen, for you also are concerned in this business.

Ars. (*to* CELIMENE). You are no doubt surprised, madam, to see me here, but these gentlemen are the cause of my presence. They both came to see me, and both complained of a want of faith which I cannot believe you to be guilty of. I have too high an opinion of you; my eyes even refused to be convinced by the strongest proofs they showed me; and in my friendship, forgetful of the little misunderstanding we have had, I readily complied with their wish to come here with them, in order to see you clear yourself from such calumny.

Aca. Yes, madam, let us see with all due calmness how you will manage to explain the matter. This letter was written by you to Clitandre.

Clit. And you wrote this affectionate note to Acaste.

Aca. (*to* ORONTE *and* ALCESTE). Gentlemen, this writing cannot be altogether unknown to you. I greatly fear, on the contrary, that her kindness has only too well acquainted you with her handwriting; still this is worth reading:

[ACASTE *reads.*]

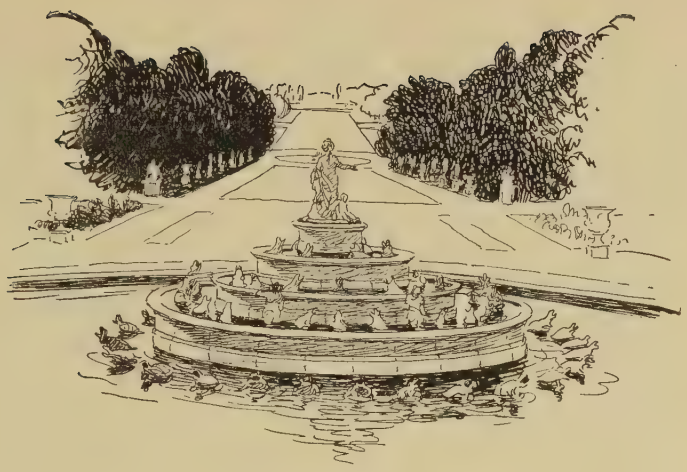
"You are a strange man to reprove my playfulness, and to reproach me with never being so merry as when I am not with you. There is nothing more unjust, and if you do not come at once and ask my pardon for this offense, I will never forgive you as long as I live. Our big gawky of a viscount"—he should have been here—"our big gawky of a viscount, with whom you begin your complaints, is a man who could never please me; and since the day that I watched him spitting in a well for full three-quarters of an hour, to make circles in the water, I have never been able to have a good opinion of him. As for the little marquis"—myself, gentlemen, let it be said without vanity—"As for the little marquis who held my hand so long yesterday, I think there is nothing so trivial as his whole person, and he is one of those men who have no other merit than what their tailor brings them. As for the man with the green ribbons"—(*to* ALCESTE) your turn now, sir,—"as for the man with the green ribbons, he amuses me sometimes with his bluntness and his irascible peevishness, but there are a thousand occasions when I think him the greatest bore in the world. As for the sonnet-maker"—(*to* ORONTE) now for your share, sir—"as for the sonnet-maker, who wants to pass for a clever wit, and will be an author in spite of everybody, I cannot even take the trouble of listening to what he says, and his prose is to me as bad as his verse. Understand, therefore, that I am not always as much entertained as you imagine; that I miss you more

than I should care to say in all the entertainments to which I am forced to go, and that there is nothing like the society of those we love to enhance all kind of pleasure."

Clit. Now it's my turn (*reads*): "Your Clitandre of whom you talk to me, and who affects such sweet manners, is the last man for whom I could feel any friendship. He is absurd enough to fancy that I love him, and you yourself are absurd to think that I do not love you. If you wish to be right, change feelings with him and come and see me as often as you possibly can, to lighten for me the misery of being persecuted by his presence." We see here the model of a fine character, madam; you know, no doubt, what name it deserves. It is enough; we shall both of us go and publish everywhere this noble picture of your heart.

After the reading, the two marquises retire, and Alceste offers to forgive Celimene, who admits that she has done wrong, but when as a test he demands that she retire with him from public life, she declines absolutely. Alceste persists in his intention of leading a solitary life, and Philinte is accepted by Eliante.

It will be seen that there is here a masterly contrast drawn between the noble pessimist and the easy-going optimist, and that lighter comedy effects are produced by cynical attacks on the fops and poetasters, with lively bits of gossip and scandal.



CHAPTER XV

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV (CONTINUED)

RACINE

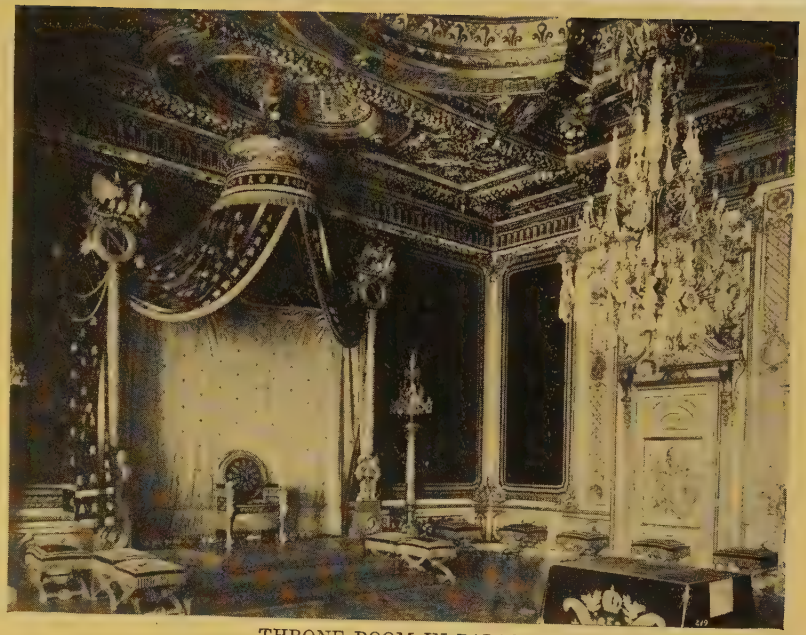
INTRODUCTORY. By the middle of the seventeenth century literature was followed by many of the cultivated persons of France—by some as a trivial pastime merely, while by others as a serious and noble calling. The drama already had been successfully cultivated by Corneille; by Moliere, whose first successful comedy was about to be produced; and by Philippe Quinault, whose first comedy appeared in 1653. The opera flourished, and the ballet accompanied it; the latter even found its way into the comedies of Moliere.

II. RACINE. Born in 1639, the only son of a minor government official, left an orphan at four years of age with his only sister Marie,

Jean Racine found a home with his paternal grandfather, who died when the little lad was only ten. Thereafter his grandmother brought him up tenderly and she felt his gratitude and devotion until her death, after he had already achieved distinction.

Racine's earliest education was received at the College of Beauvais, which he left at the age of sixteen to enter one of the subsidiary branches of the Abbey of Port Royal, where he remained for three years. Thenceforward the Jansenists are closely associated with his career, and the influence of his training by the solitaries afterward changed him from an idle man of pleasure and fashion into a devotee. At first, however, the young genius chafed at the petty restrictions of the *Petites Ecoles* (Little Schools) of Port Royal, and an incident that made quite a disagreeable impression upon his mind occurred when one of the Fathers, detecting him reading the old tale of Theagenes and Chariclea, snatched the book from him and threw it into the flames. Racine persisted in his course and succeeded in keeping a third copy of the book till he had read it through, when with some impertinence he presented it to the Father with the remark, "You may burn this now as you have done the others."

He was an ardent lover of the Greek classics, preferring Sophocles and Euripides to any others, and so familiarized himself with their writings that he often entertained his friends with long quotations from their best plays.



THRONE ROOM IN PALACE
FONTAINEBLEAU

Before Racine was nineteen he left the Port Royalists to study philosophy and logic in Paris. Here he boarded with a cousin who had a secondary position at court, and gave himself up to the pleasures of society. He met and grew friendly with La Fontaine and other gay and witty men, who helped him to pass his time in happy abandon. He made the acquaintance of actors and actresses through his unsuccessful attempt to put upon the stage a play he had written, and his friends at Port Royal were worried by his conduct. About this time he wrote an ode in honor of the King's marriage with the Infanta Maria Theresa and was substantially rewarded by the *Grand Monarque.*

By this time Racine had given up all idea of following out his original plan of entering the legal profession, but he had been persuaded to begin studying for holy orders. For a year or more he worked with a maternal uncle, but, though he went so far as to secure the office of prior, yet he was never wholly in sympathy with his calling, and feeling, perhaps, that he had submitted too tamely to outside pressure and finding himself becoming entangled in what promised to be an interminable lawsuit, he decided once and for all to return to a literary life.

Accordingly, in 1663, he was once more in Paris, where he became acquainted with Boileau and formed with him an intimate acquaintance that lasted until death separated

them. About the same time he met Moliere, and under his auspices Racine's first play, *The Thebaid,* was put upon the stage at the Palais Royal, Moliere's own theater. In this same year (1664) Racine celebrated the King's recovery from the measles in so flattering and graceful a poem that he was rewarded by a pension of six hundred francs. This was not the only "potboiler" Racine wrote for royalty.

Alexandre le Grand, Racine's next play, was also produced at the Palais Royal, but for some reason he permitted it to appear at the same time in a rival theater. This was the origin of a quarrel between Moliere and the author, in which Racine showed an unpardonable ingratitude for the favors the great comedian had granted him.

Another example of that ingratitude, which seemed an unhappy trait in Racine's character, happened about this time. His relatives were alarmed at his growing intimacy with actors and actresses, and his aunt, Agnes Racine, wrote him an affectionate letter of remonstrance. At that time his old master, Pierre Nicole, was engaged in a wordy war with a man who had attacked the Jansenists as heretics, but who had formerly written novels and plays. Nicole taunted his opponent with this, and declared that all such persons were poisoners of public morals. Racine saw fit to take this as a personal attack, and he wrote two violent letters, in which he contemptuously ridiculed the Port Royalists. The publication

of the first letter increased the ill-feeling between Racine and his old friends, but Boileau put a partial stop to the trouble by persuading Racine not to send the second letter to the press, and, as a matter of fact, it was not published until after his death. The poet was not proud of his work, and in after years bitterly repented making the unkind and unwarranted attacks.

Between 1664 and 1677 Racine produced ten plays, after which only two were written, and they only after a long interval. In 1673 he was received into the *Academie Française* and four years later he was associated by appointment with Boileau as historiographer to the King, with a good annual salary. Whatever he wrote in this capacity was lost in a fire.

The same year he received the royal appointment he was married to Catherine de Romanet, a simple-minded woman, ignorant of her husband's plays, but an excellent, well-to-do wife, with whom he lived happily and who bore him two sons and five daughters. Racine's domestic life was blameless, and at the instigation of Boileau a complete reconciliation with the solitaries of Port Royal was effected. Racine fell under the influence of Madame de Maintenon, whom Louis XIV had privately married in 1684, and at her request, but against the advice of Boileau, wrote for the pupils in her favorite school for girls, at St. Cyr, a play of a more edifying character than his classic tragedies, which they had read with too great

an interest. The result was the sacred drama *Esther,* which met with such success that he wrote in the same line one of his masterpieces, *Athalie,* which was produced by the same young ladies in 1691. Not until long after his death was either of these plays produced in public.

Port Royal was considered the center of heresies, and Racine's devotion to his old friends caused the King some annoyance, which was further intensified by a memorial drawn up by the poet, depicting the sufferings among the peasantry which had come as a result of the wars. Though Mme. de Maintenon assured Racine that the King's displeasure would pass away, it caused great sadness in the heart of the poet, who was already weakening in health, and before he was restored to royal favor he passed away, in 1699, in the sixtieth year of his age. It is, perhaps, too much to say that the King's coolness hastened the death of the dramatist, but he was vain and irritable, timid, and easily influenced by those he loved or feared, so that his more than loyalty, his abject servility, may have made him unduly sensitive and painfully responsive to the neglect of his beloved master.

His last work was a brief history of Port Royal, in which he did ample justice to the friends who had exerted so profound an influence on his checkered career.

III. The Genius of Racine. The ordinary English reader now thinks of Racine as a

rather cold and dull writer who kept too closely to classic models, both in the form and the content of his dramas; who scarcely deserves a position among the world's great writers, and whose devotion to French manners and customs has made his heroes and heroines of ancient times little more than French men and women in Greek garb. In this last charge there is a great deal of truth, but as for the remainder of the opinion, it is unwarranted and unjust. In France, on the other hand, Racine has received unstinted admiration; his plays have been acted more frequently and to more appreciative audiences than those of any other writers, and the greatest actresses have found the most perfect expression of their powers in his extraordinary lines. We say *actresses,* for Racine's finest and best drawn characters are women. So, when Frenchmen tell us that Racine is the highest genius among the writers of his race, we must hesitate before we contradict them. An adequate summary of what constitutes his real greatness would be faulty did it not acknowledge his supreme art in the psychological analysis of passion, especially in his feminine characters.

Racine's idea of a drama was a composition, simple, direct, relentless, excluding all unnecessary detail, with action intense, vivid and inevitable. He sought a flawless creation, not a complex one, and in this he followed faithfully the example of his favorite Greek authors. Racine's dramas depict life at a crisis, when

action is so stern, so rapid and violent, so unyielding, that it cannot last more than a few hours, and therefore a strict adherence to the unities is a necessity and does not hamper the genius of the author.

Compared with Corneille's, the work of Racine is more elegant, but less bold and striking. The heroes and heroines of the former are plunged into conditions of extreme emotion, and display mental qualities that raise them superior to mankind; on the other hand, Racine's characters are real men and women who cannot rise above themselves. Human passion he portrays best in the soul of woman—love, devotion, maternal affection, ambition, jealousy and rage. Not so Corneille, who stands for the triumph of the human will, while Racine stands for the tragedy of human love, the inevitableness of passion and of destiny. The later tragic poet brought in a new conception of his art.

The vocabulary of Racine is unusually limited, but he handles his words like a master and finds the few quite sufficient for the most exact and varied effects. In spite of physical and emotional weakness, Racine's mind remained always clear and strong; his powers of analysis never weakened, and he was always able either in prose or poetry to command that energy and self-restraint that made his writings so eloquent and so near perfection.

Racine does not attempt to develop the whole nature of any of his characters; he seeks only

those elements which contribute to the development of his plot. Everything is elegant and refined; no jesting; no revolting scenes of bloodshed in sight of the audience; everything in strictest decorum. He is thus in strict accord with all authors of classic tragedy; the very definition of the term excludes all comedy elements and all scenes of violence. As we have intimated, Racine's characters, though taken from classic times, are merely Frenchmen transported to a new scene. As we may expect, then, his plays are full of anachronisms, but so skillful is the great artist in his offenses of this character that the audience approves the vivid men and women and forgives any seeming unreality or impossibility.

He makes few allusions to natural objects or phenomena, but his plays develop in a thoroughly natural manner. His characters are usually high-born and aristocratic, as must be expected in classic tragedy; his verse is for the educated and refined. Therefore he has never been a poet of the masses, but rather the idol of the fastidious, cultured classes.

IV. The Minor Dramas of Racine. *The Thebaid,* the first of Racine's tragedies, was put upon the stage when the author was only twenty-five years of age and while his genius was just beginning to appeal for recognition. The influence of Corneille can easily be traced in it, and the plot is wholly lacking in originality. It is founded on the *Seven against Thebes* of Aeschylus and the *Phoenician Wom-*

en of Euripides, while the part of Haemon is borrowed from the *Antigone* of Sophocles. The wholesale slaughter of characters at the end of the play and various imperfections so troubled the author that in later years he apologized for the immaturity of his work. The plot turns on the hatred between the sons of Oedipus, as inheritors of the curse pronounced against him for his unintentional parricide and incest.

The plot of *Alexander the Great* is taken from the histories by Quintus Curtius, Plutarch and Justin. The real hero appears to be Porus rather than Alexander, and in fact, when it first appeared its title was the name of the former hero. Concerning this Racine wrote:

> I have endeavored to represent in Porus an enemy worthy of Alexander; and I may say that his character has met with a high degree of public favor, and some have even censured me for making this prince greater than Alexander. But such persons forget that in virtue of his victory Alexander is really greater than Porus, that every line of the tragedy reflects his praises, and that even the invectives of Porus and Axiana are so many tributes to the conqueror's valor. There is perhaps in Porus something that interests us more, from the very circumstance of his misfortunes; for, as Seneca has remarked, "we are naturally disposed to admire nothing in the world so much as a man who can bear adversity with courage."

Britannicus, by Racine's own admission, is a play for connoisseurs, as it requires study to appreciate its merits. Based upon the account

in Tacitus, it required so much labor and pains in its composition that it is more artificial than most of his plays; spontaneity is lost in art. Agrippina, Nero's mother, is regarded as the strongest character, Nero and Narcissus well drawn, but Junia and her lover Britannicus, the son of Messalina, and the Emperor Claudius uninteresting and insipid.

The scene of *Bajazet* is laid in the seraglio of the Sultan at Constantinople (Byzantium) in 1638, only a year before the poet's birth, a date much nearer the time of Racine's life than that of any other of his tragedies. Feeling that some apology was needed for such a practice, he cited the fact that Aeschylus in his *Persae* commemorated the expedition of Xerxes against Greece, in which struggle the Greek dramatist himself had taken part. The character of Bajazet, the Sultan's brother, has some manly qualities, but is on the whole feeble. Roxana, the Sultana and the favorite of the Sultan Amurath, embodies Eastern love, a passionate fury that resembles hate, while the crafty and intrepid Grand Vizier Achmet is an illustration that Racine could on occasion draw a strong male character.

The action in *Mithridates* takes place at Nymphaeum, a seaport in what is now known as the Crimea. In the main the career of Mithridates is correctly sketched, but in minor incidents Racine drew freely upon his imagination. Monima is represented as the betrothed of Miltiades, but was in reality killed

by him about eight years before his death, in order to prevent her falling into the hands of his conqueror, Lucullus. The tragedy of the ending of the nominal hero is somewhat mitigated by the fact that it makes possible the union of Mithridates' son, Xiphares, and Monima, in whose love the interest of the hearers is chiefly centered. Still, the closing scene is filled with sadness and lamentation over the fall of the mighty. Gentle, submissive, faithful and chaste, the slave Queen is a noble daughter of Ephesus, but aside from her there is in the play no really strong character portrayal.

Iphigenia in Aulis by Euripides is the model of Racine's *Iphigenia,* but the French poet has added to the romantic interest and the complexity of the plot by giving to Eriphyle a more important part, although no other writer has attributed treachery and jealousy of Iphigenia to her nor declared that she committed suicide. In the time-honored story of Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, a fawn was at the last moment substituted for Iphigenia in the sacrifice, while she was spirited away in a cloud to serve as priestess at the shrine of Artemis; Ovid, and at a much later time Goethe, adopted the same idea, but Racine introduces another Iphigenia, a daughter of Helen by Theseus, as the actual victim.

We have already spoken of *Esther* as the sacred drama written for the young ladies of St. Cyr at the request of Mme. de Maintenon.

The incidents follow the Bible narrative strictly; but according to custom in French drama, Esther and Haman must each have a friend and confidant, so Racine invented to perform that function the characters of Elizabeth and Hydaspes, respectively. The fulsome praise and open flattery of Louis XIV and the indirect tributes to Mme. de Maintenon show how abject was Racine's devotion to his patrons. In fact, he singles out for praise the Dauphin, whose character was notoriously bad, and commends his father for his revocation of the Edict of Nantes, perhaps the greatest political blunder the King ever made. In this connection it should be noted that such flattery was the custom of the times, and in no way restricted to Racine. With authors entirely dependent upon patronage, flattery was inevitable. For the first time Racine introduces a chorus, and the chief merit of the play, with its weakly drawn characters, is its melody and the exquisite refinement of its style.

What constitute the masterpieces of Racine is a debatable question among critics. *Les Plaideurs* (*The Litigants*) is his only comedy, and it shows what remarkable things he might have accomplished had he turned his great talents persistently in that direction; *Berenice* is a gem in execution and a wonderful study in passionate love; but *Andromaque* (*Andromache*), *Phedre* (*Phaedra*), and *Athalie* (*Athaliah*) contend for first place, with *Phedre* leading in the weight of popular approval. In the

more extended notice given the five, we use extracts taken from the metrical translations by Robert Bruce Boswell.

V. "The Litigants." Strictly speaking, *The Litigants* is neither a farce nor a comedy, but is a mingling of the two. In language and style it is a comedy; in absurd situations and exaggerated tone it is a burlesque, but its chief humor is in the mock gravity with which its ridiculous features are treated. Although at its first production in 1668 it fell flat, it was given a month later before the King, who had the good grace to laugh loudly; his courtiers naturally followed suit, all loyal citizens joined in, and since that time it has proved one of the most popular of Racine's plays. Adapted largely from *The Wasps* of Aristophanes, it has nevertheless a Rabelaisian wit and a purely French tone. Racine's own troublesome lawsuit had given him an acquaintance with the courts, and doubtless his jolly friends helped him to adapt the wit of the Greek poet to Parisian taste.

Petit-Jean, a house porter in a town of Lower Normandy, hauling along a big bag full of law-papers, opens the first scene with the following speech:

Oh, what a fool is he who trusts the future:
Who laughs at morn will cry before the night.
A judge took me, last year, into his service,—
Fetch'd me from Amiens to be Swiss porter.
These Normans thought to laugh at my expense:
When we're with wolves, one learns to howl, they say.

I played a wily hand, tho' a poor Picard,
And crack'd my whip loudly as any other.
All the fine gentlemen would, hat in hand,
Call me good Mr. Petit-Jean, with flatteries
Long as your arm. But honors without coin
Are naught. I acted like a play-house porter;
In vain they knock'd, and bow'd with heads uncover'd,
Save with the silver key, they might not enter.
No money,—then no Swiss, to unlock the door.
'Tis true my master's pocket took a scantling;
Sometimes there came a reckoning. 'Twas my charge
To purchase hay, and candles for the house;
I did not lose by that, at all events;
I might have bought the straw into the bargain.
His heart was too much in his work, however,—
The more's the pity,—first in court, and last,
Each day, and often quite alone; believe me,
He'd like to sleep there without sup or morsel.
I'd say at times,—"Dear Mr. Perrin Dandin,
Excuse my freedom, you get up too early.
He who would travel far should spare his steed;
Drink, eat, and sleep, and make a fire to last."
He took no heed. And so well have his vigils
Repaid him, that they say his brain is crack'd.
One up, one down, he wants to judge us all.
He's always mumbling some strange gibberish,
I know not what, and will, by hook or crook,
Take with him into bed his wig and gown.
He had his cock killed, in a fit of rage,
Because it didn't wake him up in time:
He said, a suitor, whose affair went ill,
Had with a bribe corrupted the poor bird.
Poor man, this sentence did him little good,
His son all talk of business has tabooed:
He makes us guard him closely night and day,
Or else,—good-bye, he's off, and in the court!
Heav'n knows, he's quick enough to give the slip.
And I,—no sleep for me, I'm growing thin,
Wretchedly thin; I stretch my arms and yawn.

But watch who will, this bag shall be my pillow:
To-night, i' faith, I'll take my ease for once!
No one can blame me sleeping in the streets.
Let's go to sleep.

[*He lies down on the ground.*

Dandin, a crazy judge, the employer of Petit-Jean, escapes from his home, but is detected by his son, Leander, and returned to the house, under care of Petit-Jean. Then, to the clerk, L'Intime, Leander explains that he is as crazy as his father, but with love for Isabelle, daughter of Chicaneau, a confirmed litigant, who wishes to see the judge, and as he appears meets a Countess engaged on the same errand. It seems that Chicaneau has just been beaten in a suit that has been dragging on for twenty years and been obliged to pay three hundred pounds of costs, although he sued for damages, merely because of a trifling trespass by a donkey; the Countess is in despair because she has been forbidden to go to law by a court order, and "life is worthless without going to law"; and when Chicaneau tries to advise the Countess they fall into a senseless and ridiculous quarrel, into which Petit-Jean is also drawn.

Chicaneau will permit no one to see his daughter, but L'Intime, under the guise of serving a writ against her father, gives her a letter from Leander, whom she loves. While reading it, she sees her father enter, tears up the "writ," and makes her father say:

What is this?
It was a writ that she was reading then.

She'll yet do credit to her family,
And hold her own! Come to my arms, my child!
I'll buy you "The Complete Guide to the Law."
But—hang it all—writs shouldn't be torn up.

L'Intime then serves upon Chicaneau a false writ, as though upon suit of the Countess. The scene continues:

CHICANEAU

Yes, pray assure her I have sent a bailiff
To satisfy her claims as she deserves.
What! Is the injured party to be punish'd?
Let's see what song she sings. H'm—"The sixteenth
Of January, for having falsely said,
Prompted by evil motives, that the high
And noble dame, the Countess of Pimbesche,
Ought to be kept in durance as insane,
Be't now declared th' above named Jeremy
Shall straightway to th' aforesaid lady's house
Betake himself, and before witnesses
Not less than four, besides a notary,
In a clear voice acknowledge her sound judgment."
Sign'd, "Good." Is he your sheriff?

L'INTIME

At your service.

(Aside.)

I'll face it out in brazen impudence.

CHICANEAU

I never saw a writ sign'd "Good" before.
Who's Mr. Good?

L'INTIME

Sir?

CHICANEAU

I say you're a rogue.

L'INTIME

I beg your pardon, I'm an honest man.

CHICANEAU

The most consummate knave 'tween this and Rome.

L'INTIME

'Tis not for me to contradict you, Sir:
But you will have to pay for defamation.

CHICANEAU

Pay? Yes, with blows.

L'INTIME

You are too gentle, Sir;
You'll pay me in good coin.

CHICANEAU

My head will burst
If he goes on. Take that!

L'INTIME

A box on th' ear!
I'll write it down, "that the said Jeremy,
With other outrages, struck me, a bailiff;
And thereby knock'd my hat into the mud."

CHICANEAU *(giving him a kick)*

Take that, too!

L'INTIME

Thanks. As good as ready money!
I want some badly. "Not content with that,
Follow'd it up by giving me a kick."
Bravo! "Moreover, the aforesaid Jeremy
Tried, in a rage, to tear this present statement."
Come, my dear Sir, this goes on splendidly.
Don't stop.

CHICANEAU

You rascal!

L'INTIME

Do just what you please.
Give me the stick next, if you would oblige me.

CHICANEAU *(holding up a stick)*

Yes, that I will, and see if you're a bailiff.

L'INTIME *(preparing to write)*

Quick, hit me then. I have four hungry children.

CHICANEAU

Forgive me! you're a bailiff, sure enough;
But the most clever man may be deceived.

I wrong'd you sadly, but will make amends:
Yes, you're a bailiff, Sir, a thorough bailiff.
Your hand: such men as you have my respect;
And my late father always brought me up
In the fear of Heav'n, and of bailiffs, Sir.

L'INTIME

No, you don't beat me on such easy terms.

CHICANEAU

Don't draw up a complaint, Sir!

L'INTIME

Words of insult,
A stick raised, ears box'd, and a kick!

CHICANEAU

Nay, rather
Give them me back, please.

L'INTIME

They are far too precious;
I wouldn't part with them for fifty pounds.

Enter LEANDER *(dressed as a magistrate).*

L'INTIME

Here comes his Worship, in the nick of time:
Your presence, Sir, is just what we require.
This gentleman has made me a small present,
And giv'n me a tremendous box on th' ear.

LEANDER

What, you, Sir?

L'INTIME

Me, I say. *Item,* a kick;
Besides the names that he bestows on me.

LEANDER

And have you witnesses?

L'INTIME

Put your hand here, Sir:
Feel how my ear and cheek are tingling still.

LEANDER

Ha! Taken in the act! assault and battery!

CHICANEAU

I'm in a nasty fix!

L'INTIME

His daughter, too,
At least she said she was, tore up my writ,
Saying she was pleased to get it, and defied us
To do our worst.

LEANDER (*to* L'INTIME)

Then bring the daughter here.
They seem a contumacious family.

CHICANEAU (*aside*)

These people must most surely have bewitch'd me:
May I be hang'd if I know one of them!

Isabelle comes in, sees Leander disguised as a lawyer, and they, in talking about the writ, slyly make love to each other under her father's nose. Leander makes Chicaneau acknowledge the service of the writ, but what he really signs is a marriage contract between Leander and Isabelle. Petit-Jean interrupts to say that Judge Dandin has escaped, and just as he finishes speaking the judge calls "Silence in the court" from a garret window. From this ridiculous position, Dandin hears the Countess, Chicaneau and L'Intime make their complaints, interrupting one another and often speaking in unison. In the confusion Leander slips inside, removes his disguise and comes out in his own character. In the meantime, Petit-Jean has taken the judge from the roof and confined him in the cellar, from whose window he thrusts his head, and the three litigants again begin to state their cases. Chicaneau promises the judge a cask of fine wine, and the

Countess calls it bribery. In the excitement L'Intime, still disguised as a bailiff, and Chicaneau fall into the cellar, and the former is told by Leander to keep the latter till morning, so that the courtship of Isabelle may proceed without interruption. Dandin escapes and wishes to "judge something." Leander has difficulty in restraining his father, but as the dog just then steals a fat capon, the judge is finally persuaded to return to the house and try the case, with L'Intime and Petit-Jean as advocates for the defendant and plaintiff, respectively.

The trial begins with the third scene in the third act:

DANDIN, LEANDER, L'INTIME AND PETIT-JEAN *(dressed as advocates)*, THE PROMPTER

DANDIN

Pray, who are you?

LEANDER

These are the advocates.

DANDIN *(to the Prompter)*

And you?

THE PROMPTER

I come t' assist their memories.

DANDIN

I see. And you?

LEANDER

I represent the public.

DANDIN

Begin then.

THE PROMPTER

Gentlemen—

PETIT-JEAN

Don't speak so loud;
For, if you prompt like that, they can't hear me.
Gentlemen—

DANDIN

Put your cap on.

PETIT-JEAN

Oh, my lord—

DANDIN

Put on your cap, I say.

PETIT-JEAN

I know my place.

DANDIN

Don't put it on, then.

PETIT-JEAN *(putting on his cap)*

Gentlemen—
(To the Prompter.)
Be quiet;
I know the first part of my speech all right.
Gentlemen, when I carefully observe
The mutability of mundane matters,
And see amidst the various tribes of men
Not one fix'd star, but many wandering orbs;
When I behold the Caesars and their greatness;
When I behold the sun, and view the moon;
When I behold the rule of Babybonia[1]
Pass from the Serpians[2] to the Nacedonians;[3]
When I see Lome[4] change from prespotic[5] pow'r
To memocratic,[6] thence to monarchy;
When I survey Japan—

L'INTIME

When will the fellow
Have done surveying?

PETIT-JEAN

Why this interruption?
I'll say no more.

[1]Babylonia. [2]Persians. [3]Macedonians.
[4]Rome [5]Despotic. [6]Democratic.

DANDIN

You meddling advocate,
Why can't you let him finish his exordium?
I was quite feverish with desire to hear
How from Japan he'd come back to his capon,
When you thrust in your frivolous remark.
Counsel, proceed.

PETIT-JEAN

Ah, now I've lost the thread.

LEANDER

Courage! Go on, you've made a fine beginning;
But why d' you let your arms hang at your side
Like that, and stand stock still like any statue?
Come, rouse yourself, and show a little life.

PETIT-JEAN *(moving his arms up and down)*

When—when I see— I see—

LEANDER

Say what you see.

PETIT-JEAN

Zounds, I can't hunt two hares at once, you know.

THE PROMPTER

We read—

PETIT-JEAN

We read—

THE PROMPTER

In th' Metamorphoses—

PETIT-JEAN

Eh?

THE PROMPTER

That the Metempsy—

PETIT-JEAN

The Metempsy—

THE PROMPTER

—chosis—

PETIT-JEAN

The chosis—

THE PROMPTER
Donkey!

PETIT-JEAN
Donkey.

THE PROMPTER
Stop!

PETIT-JEAN
Stop.

THE PROMPTER
Silly idiot!

PETIT-JEAN
Silly idiot.

THE PROMPTER
Dolt!

PETIT-JEAN
Dolt.

THE PROMPTER
Plague upon you!

PETIT-JEAN
Plague upon yourself!
Look at that fellow with his lantern jaws!
Go to the deuce!

DANDIN
And you, come to the point;
Tell me the facts.

PETIT-JEAN
Why beat about the bush?
They make me talk in words a fathom long,
In words that reach from here to Jericho.
For my part I've no need of such ado
In saying that a mastiff stole a capon,
(Indeed there's nothing that he won't run off with,)
And ate it up,—the finest in the yard.
The first time that I find him there again,
His trial shall be short, I'll crack his skull.

LEANDER
A fine conclusion,—worthy of the prologue!

PETIT-JEAN

It's plain enough, find fault with it who may.

DANDIN

Call witnesses.

LEANDER

That's easier said than done,
For witnesses cost dear, or won't come forward.

PETIT-JEAN

We've got some, all the same,—beyond reproach.

DANDIN

Produce them, then.

PETIT-JEAN

I have them in my pocket:
Look here, I've got the capon's head and legs,
See then, and judge.

L'INTIME

Nay, I object.

DANDIN

All right,
What's your objection?

L'INTIME

They're from Maine, my lord.

DANDIN

Ah, true; they hatch them by the dozen there.

L'INTIME

My lord—

DANDIN

Will you be long, Sir? Tell me that.

L'INTIME

I really cannot say.

DANDIN

At least, he's honest.

L'INTIME *(rising to a scream)*

Whate'er can daunt a prisoner at the bar,
All that to mortals shows most terrible,
Fortune appears to have array'd against us,
In eloquence and partisanship. For

While on the one hand the deceased's renown
Alarms me, on the other my opponent
With practiced tongue confounds.

DANDIN

Pray, Sir, subdue
Your own o'erpowering accents, if you please.

L'INTIME *(in an ordinary tone)*

I will: I've many others.
(in a soft tone of voice).
But howe'er
His sounding periods fill me with mistrust,
And the deceased one's fame; yet still, my lord,
I rest my hopes on your impartial mind.
Before great Dandin innocence is bold,
Before this Cato of our Norman soil;
This Sun of Justice that is never dim;
Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

DANDIN

Truly, he argues well.

L'INTIME

So without fear
I speak, and advocate my righteous cause.
In Aristotle's work on "Politics"
It has been said full well—

DANDIN

The question, Sir,
Concerns a capon, and not politics.

L'INTIME

Yes, but the Stagirite's authority
Would prove that good and evil—

DANDIN

I maintain
That Aristotle has no *locus standi* here.
Come to the facts.

L'INTIME

Pausanias in his book—

DANDIN

Discuss the facts.

L'INTIME
Rebuffi—

DANDIN
Facts, I say.

L'INTIME
The great James—

DANDIN
Facts, facts, facts!

L'INTIME
Harmenopul—

DANDIN
I will sum up.

L'INTIME
You are so quick, my lord.
(speaking rapidly.)
The facts are these. A dog invades a kitchen,
And finds a capon there of good proportions.
Now, he for whom I speak is very hungry,
He against whom I speak lies ready pluck'd,
Then he whose cause I plead, with stealthy step
Draws near, and grabs him against whom I've spoken.
A warrant's issued, he's arrested, counsel
Are call'd, a day is fix'd, I am to speak,
I speak, and I have spoken. There,—I've done!

DANDIN
Tut, tut! A pretty way to state a case!
His pace is slow and stately while he utters
Irrelevant remarks; but, when he comes
To facts, he gallops.

L'INTIME
The best part came first.
Nay, worst. That's not the proper way to plead.
What say the public?

LEANDER
Quite in th' latest fashion.

L'INTIME *(in an impassioned tone)*
What happens next? They come,—how do they come?

They chase my client, break into a house,—
Whose house? Your house, my lord,—our judge's house;
The cellar is invaded, where we fled;
We are accused of theft and brigandage,
Dragg'd out, and given over to our foes,
To Master Petit-Jean. You'll bear me out,
My lord, that in the Digest *Si quis canis,—*
De vi—and paragraph *caponibus,*
The law condemns an outrage of this kind;
And even were it true my client Ginger
Had eaten all or part of the said capon,
All he had done before should be consider'd
In mitigation of his punishment.
When has my client merited rebuke?
Has not your house by him been safely guarded?
When has he fail'd to bark at robbers' footsteps?
Witness three proctors, who by Ginger here
Had their gowns torn. See, I produce the pieces.
Will you have other proofs of his good conduct?

PETIT-JEAN

Ah, Master Adam—

L'INTIME

Peace!

PETIT-JEAN

But, L'Intime—

L'INTIME

Peace!

PETIT-JEAN

You are growing hoarse.

L'INTIME

Leave me alone.

DANDIN

Compose yourself, and finish.

L'INTIME *(in a drawling tone)*

Since I may,—
Take breath,—and am forbidden,—to prolong,—
My speech,—I will without prevarication
Compendiously express, explain, unfold

Before your eyes the transcendental truth
Of this my cause, and of the facts involved.

DANDIN

Let him say all, and say it twenty times,
Rather than such abridgment. Be you human,
Or fiend incarnate, end—or Heav'n confound you!

L'INTIME

I've nearly done.

DANDIN

Ah!

L'INTIME

Ere the world was made—

DANDIN

Let us get on, Sir, to the deluge.

L'INTIME

Ere
The world was made, before it was created,
The world and all the universe lay buried
In the abyss of matter, Earth and Air,
Water and Fire,—all the elements,
Heap'd in confusion, swallow'd up in space;
A shapeless, indistinguishable mass
Form'd one vast chaos, where no order reign'd;
UNUS ERAT TOTO NATURAE VULTUS IN ORBE,
QUEM GRAECI DIXERE CHAOS, RUDIS INDIGESTAQUE MOLES.
(DANDIN *goes to sleep, and tumbles off his chair.*)

LEANDER

Oh, father! What a fall!

PETIT-JEAN

He's fast asleep!

LEANDER

Father, wake up.

PETIT-JEAN

Sir, are you dead?

LEANDER

My father!

DANDIN

Well, well, what is it? What a man he is!
I've never had so sound a nap before.

LEANDER

Give sentence, father.

DANDIN

To the galleys with him!

LEANDER

A dog sent to the galleys!

DANDIN

Faith, I know
Nothing about the matter. My head's full
Of chaos and confusion.

L'INTIME *(exhibiting some puppies)*

Come, poor children,
Come, cruel hearts would leave you fatherless;
Come, let your innocence for mercy plead.
Yes, here you may behold our misery;
Make us not orphans, give us back our father,
Our father, he to whom we owe our life,
Our father, who—

DANDIN

Quick, quick, take them away.

L'INTIME

Our father—

DANDIN

What a hubbub! Take them off;
They're messing all the place.

L'INTIME

See, we are weeping.

DANDIN

My heart already melts with sympathy;
Oh! 'tis a sight to touch a father's heart!
I'm terribly perplex'd. The truth is clear;
Th' offense is proved; he has himself confess'd it.
But, if he be condemn'd, how hard the fate
Of these poor children, left to charity!
I've an engagement,—no one must disturb me.

Enter CHICANEAU *and* ISABELLE

CHICANEAU

My lord—

DANDIN (*to* PETIT-JEAN *and* L'INTIME)

Yes, I will hear you, and you only.

(*to* CHICANEAU.)

Good day. But tell me, please, who is that child?

CHICANEAU

That is my daughter.

DANDIN

Quick, then, call her back.

ISABELLE

You are engaged.

DANDIN

No matter, I assure you,

(*to* CHICANEAU).

You might have told me that you were her father.

CHICANEAU

Sir—

DANDIN

Let her speak, she knows your business best.

(*to* ISABELLE.)

Speak, dear—How pretty, and what charming eyes!
But that's not all. You must be wise as well.
It does me good to see such youth and beauty.
I've been a gay young fellow in my day,
And been much talk'd about.

ISABELLE

I well believe it.

DANDIN

Tell me, now, who you wish should lose his cause.

ISABELLE

No one.

DANDIN

For you I will do anything.
Speak.

ISABELLE

I am sure I'm much obliged to you.

DANDIN

Hast ever witness'd anybody tortured?

ISABELLE

No, and I trust I never shall, my lord.

DANDIN

If you would like it, you shall see it done.

ISABELLE

Ah! could one ever see poor wretches suffer?

DANDIN

It serves to pass away an hour or two.

CHICANEAU

My lord, I come to tell you—

LEANDER

I can state
The whole affair, my father, in two words;
It is about a marriage. You must know
That all is settled, and your sanction only
Is wanting. Both the lovers long to wed,
The father to his daughter's wish consents.
Will you confirm the contract?

DANDIN *(resuming his seat)*

Let them marry
Without delay, to-morrow if they please,
To-day if need be.

LEANDER

See, my father's yours,
Greet him, my love.

CHICANEAU

How's this?

DANDIN

What myst'ry's here?

LEANDER

Your judgment is precisely carried out.

DANDIN

I can't revoke the sentence I've pronounced.

CHICANEAU

But surely you'll consult my daughter's wishes.

LEANDER

By all means. Let fair Isabelle decide.

CHICANEAU

Well, are you dumb? It is your turn to speak.

ISABELLE

I do not dare to appeal against the judgment.

CHICANEAU

I'll do it, then.

LEANDER *(showing him a paper)*

Look at this writing, Sir.
You will not challenge your own signature?

CHICANEAU

What is it, pray?

LEANDER

A marriage contract, Sir,
All duly sign'd and seal'd.

CHICANEAU

I have been trick'd,
But I'll have satisfaction. This shall lead
To twenty lawsuits. If you get my daughter,
You shall not get my money.

LEANDER

Have I ask'd it?
Give me your daughter, I want nothing else.

CHICANEAU

Ah!

LEANDER

Father, are you pleased with your day's work?

DANDIN

Right well. Let suits flow in abundantly,
And I will pass my life with you, content.
The advocates, however, must not be
So lengthy. What about the culprit?

LEANDER

Father,
Pardon him. Let us all rejoice to-day.

DANDIN

Well, let him go.

(*to* ISABELLE.)

For your sake, dear, he's free.
I'll take a holiday, then try new cases.

VI. "BERENICE." The scene of *Berenice* is laid at Rome in a small chamber between her apartments and those of Titus, the Emperor of Rome, and the action is almost as brief as the time required for its performance. It has elegiac power, is a better play than the one on the same subject by Corneille, and it scored a triumph on its presentation, though considered tedious by many. It is said that Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, and the daughter of Charles I of England, who had had some tender passages with Louis XIV, slyly suggested to both that they write a tragedy on the Parting of Titus and Berenice, and both poets accepted the test of their powers, with the result we have indicated. Critics differ as to the merits of Racine's play, but it is sufficiently remarkable that he should have produced so excellent a work from such meager materials. *Berenice* is still acted, and it gives the impression of flawless beauty while presenting a moving appeal to the feelings.

There are but three characters of importance: Titus, Emperor of Rome; Berenice, Queen of Palestine; and Antiochus, King of Commagene.

Antiochus, a former lover of Berenice upon whom she has enjoined silence, seeks an inter-

view with her, for although he has been three years in Rome under a mask of friendship, his passion still remains. After the interview, however, if he finds her pledged to Titus, he has decided to leave Rome forever, as friendship for Titus demands he should do. Berenice tells of her love for Titus, and Antiochus, reciting the steps by which they have reached this situation, explains the sincerity and permanence of his love and declares that he must say farewell forever. Berenice is offended at his persistence, but after his departure lives in secret sorrow.

Titus is informed by his friend Paulinus that Rome looks with disfavor on Berenice as Empress and feels that ere the sun has set the Senate will pronounce its disapproval on a union with a foreign Queen and beg for an Empress more worthy. The passion of Titus is deep, but he decides she must be sent back to Palestine with Antiochus this very night:

Under what specious names does Glory mask
Her cruel will! How would her charms seem fairer,
Were it but death she call'd on me to face!
Till now, 'twas Berenice who inspired
The ardor that I felt for her attractions.
You know that once Renown no luster shed
Around my name; brought up at Nero's court,
My youth, by ill example led astray,
Too prone to heed the voice of self-indulgence,
Scorn'd nobler aims, Paulinus. Berenice
Enthrall'd my heart. What cannot Love achieve
To please the loved one, and to win tho' vanquish'd?
I spent my blood; all to my sword gave way;

Triumphant I return'd. But tears and blood
Sufficed not to deserve my lady's favor:
A thousand wretches bless'd the aid I brought them.
On every side they saw my bounty spread,
And I was happy, more than you can guess,
When in her eyes I read warm approbation
Of countless hearts won by my benefits.
I owe her all. And what reward is hers?
That debt about to be flung back upon her!
As recompense for virtues so unrival'd
My tongue will say: "Depart, see me no more."

Berenice comes to the King with her friend Phoenice:

BERENICE

Be not offended, if my zeal outruns
Discretion, and disturbs your privacy.
While your Court, gathering around, repeat
The favors show'r'd so freely on my head,
Sir, is it right that I at such a moment
Should stay alone, and gratitude be silent?
I know your friend sincere, nor need I shun
His presence, well acquainted as he is
With our hearts' secret; you have done with mourning,
Nought hinders you, and yet you seek me not.
I hear you offer me another scepter,
But from yourself I hear no word of it.
Let us have more repose and less display;
Is your love dumb except before the Senate?
Ah, Titus (for my heart disowns those titles
Of majesty which fear and reverence prompt),
Why should your love be burden'd with such cares?
Are crowns the only prize that it can offer?
How long have you supposed I covet grandeur?
A sigh, a look, a word that falls from you,
Are all th' ambition of a heart like mine.
See me more often, and come empty handed.
Is all your time devoted to your empire?
Eight days have pass'd, and have you nought to tell me?

One word would reassure this timid heart!
But was your speech of me, when I surprised you?
Were my concerns the subject of discourse?
Was I at least, Sir, present to your thought?

TITUS

Of that you may be sure: for Heav'n is witness
That Berenice is before me always.
Nor time, nor absence, once again I swear it,
Can banish you from my adoring soul.

BERENICE

Why, what is this? You swear eternal ardor,
But, even while you swear, are cold as ice!
Why make appeal to Heav'n's omnipotence?
What need have I of oaths to strengthen trust?
I have no wish to think you false, my lord,
And will believe the witness of a sigh.

TITUS

Madam—

BERENICE

I listen. But, without reply,
You turn away your eyes and seem perplex'd!
Why is your countenance so full of woe?
Will you for ever mourn your father's death?
Can nothing charm away this gnawing sorrow?

TITUS

Ah! would to Heav'n my father yet were living,
How happy should I be!

BERENICE

Sir, this regret
Does honor to your filial piety,
But to his memory your tears have paid
Due tribute. Other cares you owe to Rome;
I dare not say how much your glory moves
My own concern. Once I could soothe your troubles,
And Berenice's voice you heard with pleasure;
For your sake vex'd with manifold misfortunes,
A word from you has made me check my tears.
You mourn a father: 'tis a common sorrow,

While I (the bare remembrance makes me shudder,)
So nearly torn from him whom more than life
I loved, the anguish of whose heart you know
When parted from my Titus for a moment,
I, who would die if banish'd from your sight,
Never to see you more—

TITUS

Alas! What say you?
Why choose this time? Pray cease, for pity's sake:
Your kindness crushes an ungrateful wretch.

BERENICE

Ungrateful! can it be that you are that?
Are you so weary of my tenderness?

TITUS

No, never; since I must the truth confess,
My heart burns now with fiercer flames than ever.
But—

BERENICE

Speak.

TITUS

Alas!

BERENICE

Go on.

TITUS

Rome and the empire—

BERENICE

Well, Sir?

TITUS

Let's go, Paulinus; I am dumb.

[*Exeunt* TITUS *and* PAULINUS.

BERENICE

So soon to leave me! and without a word!
A doleful meeting truly, dear Phoenice!
What have I done? What means he by this silence?

PHOENICE

Like you I'm puzzled to account for it.
Does nothing to your memory occur
Which may have raised a prejudice against you?
Consider well.

BERENICE

Alas! you may believe me,
The more I wish to bring to mind the past,
From the first day I saw him till this hour,
The only fault I find is too much fondness.
You heard us. Tell me frankly, my Phoenice,
Did I say anything that could displease him?
I know not if, perchance, with too much heat
I scorn'd his gifts, or blamed the grief that vex'd him—
Is it his people's hatred that he dreads?
He fears, it may be, to espouse a Queen.
Alas, if that were true.—It cannot be,
A hundred times at least he has assured me
He slights their cruel laws. Why does he not
Explain so harsh a silence? This suspense
Will kill me. How could I endure to live
Neglected, feeling I had him offended?
Let us go after him. But thro' my brain
Flashes a thought that may the source reveal
Of this disorder. Has he learn'd where loves
Antiochus? Can that have moved his anger?
I heard the King was summon'd to his presence.
Why further seek for cause of my distress?
Doubtless this trouble that has so alarm'd me
Is but a light suspicion, which with ease
May be disarm'd. This feeble victory
Brings me no pride, my Titus. Would to Heav'n
A rival worthier of your jealous fears
Might try my faith, and offer empire wider
Than Rome can boast, to pay me for my love;
While you had nought to give me but yourself!
Then would you see, victorious and beloved,
How much I prize your heart, my dearest Titus.
Come, let us go. One word will clear his doubts.
Let me take courage, I can please him still.
Too soon have I counted myself unhappy;
Titus must love me if his heart is jealous.

Antiochus comes to take leave of Titus, who

begs him to speak to Berenice, a favor which Antiochus painfully denies until he learns that Titus has decided to send his beloved Queen back to Palestine in charge of Antiochus. Then, after the departure of the Emperor, under the persuasion of his friend Arsaces and hoping he may still win her love, he yields. Berenice appears, is surprised to see him, angry at his hesitation to tell her why he has remained, and when Antiochus is driven to an explanation, declares that he is dishonest, has set a trap to separate her and the Emperor, and must leave her disgraced. Antiochus goes to his palace to await the turn of events.

In a painful interview between the Emperor and the Queen the agony of both souls is seen, the former struggling between his loyalty to Rome and his love for Berenice, the latter reproachful, loving, despairing. They part in deep distress, the Queen assuring Titus that she cannot exist without his love and that she will take her life. Titus is assured by his friend that Berenice will be consoled, but Antiochus tells of the Queen's terrible grief and urges him to go to her again. The Senate, consuls, and tribunes are announced as in waiting, and Titus goes to meet them, hoping that when he returns the Queen will no longer doubt his love.

Arsaces announces to Antiochus that all is over—that Titus will prove faithful to Rome and will not see Berenice again. But Titus enters and claims an interview with Berenice,

who refuses to listen to his love and declares she will leave, as he has commanded. Titus secures a letter she has written, and learns that she contemplates suicide. Titus in his turn resolves to take the same course and makes his passionate avowal to Berenice. Antiochus returns and explains to the King how ardent a rival he has been, but how faithful Berenice has been. The Queen declares that Titus should now understand the depth of her love for him and, as he has requested, she will go and live, leaving him to his kingdom and both to a life of sorrow and suffering.

VII. "ANDROMACHE." A more intricate plot, a greater number of characters, and a wider variety of motives are what make *Andromache* unusual for Racine. With skillful and sympathetic hand he portrays friendship and love, maternal tenderness, jealousy, anger and despair, all in the perfected language of the French court of the time of Louis XIV, and demonstrates that the emotions of the human soul have been the same in all ages.

It was a well-known theme that Racine selected, for Euripides had made it famous on the Greek stage in his great drama of the same name, the story had been told in the third book of the *Aeneid,* and many a subsequent writer in France and elsewhere had renewed public interest in it by allusion or recital. But Racine gave to the subject a new interest by his poetic treatment and the harmony between classic and modern ideas.

The author was only twenty-eight, and the triumph which the play was accorded was equal to that of Corneille's *Cid*. To suit his purposes, the dramatist changed the old story so as to make Astyanax the son of Hector instead of Molossus, her son at a later date by Pyrrhus, the object of Andromache's passionate attachment; he introduces four characters, two men and two women. Andromache, still young and beautiful, the widow of Hector, lives for but two things: the memory of her husband and her devotion to her son, who, like herself, is the captive slave of Pyrrhus, son of Achilles and King of Epirus. Pyrrhus, somewhat barbarous, but chivalrous, direct and honest, is desperately in love with his captive Andromache, although betrothed to Hermione, the daughter of Helen. Orestes, son of Agamemnon, a melancholy man, is dominated solely by his burning passion for Hermione, the splendid creature who is being consumed by her passion for Pyrrhus. The latter declares that unless Andromache will marry him, her son shall be killed; she consents to wed, but resolves to slay herself the moment Astyanax is released. When Hermione learns of the approaching marriage, she sends for Orestes; Cleone is her friend:

ORESTES

Can it be
That I, for once, in seeking you obey
Your bidding, or has false hope flatter'd me?
Have you indeed wish'd me to come to you?

Shall I believe your eyes, at last disarm'd,
Will—

HERMIONE

I would know whether you love me, Sir.

ORESTES

Love you! Great gods! My vows too hard to keep,
My flight, return, reverence that curb'd reproach,
My dark despair, my eyes all drown'd in tears:
What witness will you, if you trust not these?

HERMIONE

I trust them all; avenge me.

ORESTES

Let us go,
My mistress, and once more set Greece on fire.
This arm shall make your name renown'd; and you
Shall rival Helen, I the King of Men.
Let us revive the miseries of Troy
Here in Epirus, and our fathers' fame
Eclipse. Yes, I am ready; let us start.

HERMIONE

No, let us stay, nor carry these affronts
So far. What! crown the insults of my foes,
And wait elsewhere to wreak a slow revenge!
Resign myself to the arbitrament of war,
That after all might fail to vindicate
My wrongs! I will have all Epirus weep
When I depart. Avenge me in an hour,
Or not at all. Delay,—and you refuse.
Haste to the temple. You must slay—

ORESTES

Ay, whom?

HERMIONE

Pyrrhus.

ORESTES

The King?

HERMIONE

Your hatred hesitates?
Run quickly thither, lest I call you back.

Speak not of duties I would fain forget,
Nor will I hear a word in his defense,
And least from you.

ORESTES

From me! Your tenderness
Has stamp'd his crime too deeply on my soul.
Let us take vengeance, but by other means,
Become his foes, but not his murderers;
And with the arms of justice ruin him.
Shall I for answer to the Greeks bring back
His head? And have I taken on myself
This charge from them, to turn assassin? No,
In Heaven's name let Greece the challenge meet,
And crush'd beneath her hatred let him die.
The name of king is sacred, and the brow—

HERMIONE

Is not my sentence then enough for you?
That my offended dignity demands
A victim to be offer'd to myself?
That if you quell the tyrant you shall have
Me for reward? That I hate him whom once
I loved. Yes, I confess it, he knew how
To win my heart; whether my father's will
Or inclination moved me matters not.
Act on that knowledge. Tho' he broke his vows,
Tho' with just horror I regard his crime,
Yet, while he lives, fear I may still forgive.
Distrust my wavering wrath, till death removes
The monster. For unless he dies to-day,
To-morrow I may love him.

ORESTES

Then must death
Prevent his pardon. How shall I proceed?
Can I so soon avenge your injuries?
Where lies the path that leads him to his doom?
I have but just set foot upon this soil,
And you would have me overturn the State,
And slay the King; and for his punishment

You grant me but a day; no, not an hour.
It must be done before his people's eyes;
My victim to the altar shall be brought.
No longer I demur, I will but go
And view th' appointed place of sacrifice:
This night I do your bidding, and he dies!

HERMIONE

Meanwhile to-day he weds Andromache;
Already in the shrine his throne is set,
His crime accomplish'd, and my shame confirm'd.
Why should you wait? He offers you his life;
No guards attend him to this festival,
He makes them all encircle Hector's son,
And gives himself to my avenger's arm.
Will you then of his life take greater care
Than he does? Arm my followers, with your Greeks;
Stir up your friends; on mine you may rely.
Me he betrays, fools you, and scorns us all.
Surely their hatred is as great as mine,
The Trojan woman's husband loath to spare.
Speak, and my foe cannot escape your hands,
Or rather they will strike him dead themselves.
Lead or be led by this their noble rage;
Dyed with the faithless wretch's blood, return;
Thus only can you gain my heart. Now go.

ORESTES

But, Madam, think—

HERMIONE

This really passes bounds,
Your scruples grate upon my angry mood.
I show the way to win Hermione,
And make Orestes happy; but I see
He will do nought to earn her, only whine
For ever. Go; boast of your constancy
Elsewhere, and leave me to avenge myself.
My weak concessions fill my soul with shame,
One day of such refusals is too much.
When all is ready for the marriage rite,

And where you dare not venture, I will go
Alone, find means t' approach my enemy,
And stab the heart I could not touch with love.
Then shall my blood-stain'd hands, turn'd on myself,
Unite our destiny in spite of him:
And, traitor tho' he be, 'twill be more sweet
For me to die with him than live with you.

ORESTES

No, I will rob you of that dismal joy;
He shall not die but by Orestes' hand.
Yes, by my arm your enemies shall fall,
And you shall then reward me, if you will.

HERMIONE

Go. Leave your future fortune in my care
Let all your ships be ready for our flight.

[*Exit* ORESTES.

CLEONE

Think, Madam, ere your ruin you invoke—

HERMIONE

Ruin or no, I mean to have revenge.
I doubt, whatever promises be made,
The trust reposed on others than myself:
The guilt of Pyrrhus does not scorch his eyes
As it does mine; my stroke would be more sure.
To be my own avenger would be sweet,
To stain this fair arm with the traitor's blood,
And, to increase my pleasure and his pain,
To hide my rival from his dying gaze!
What if Orestes fail to let him know
He dies a victim sacrificed to me!
Go, find and tell him to inform the wretch
He owes his death to me, and not to Greece.
Run, dear Cleone, my revenge is balk'd,
If he should die unconscious that his doom
Proceeds from me.

CLEONE

I will obey you.—Ah!
What do I see? Who would have fancied it?
The King himself!

HERMIONE

Follow Orestes straight,
He must do nought till he sees me again! [*Exit* CLEONE

Enter PYRRHUS *and* PHOENIX.

PYRRHUS

You are surprised that I should seek you here,
And my approach disturbs your colloquy.
I do not come arm'd with unworthy wiles,
No feign'd excuse shall gloss the wrong I do:
My heart condemns me with no doubtful voice,
Nor can I urge a plea I know is false.
I wed a Trojan woman. Yes, I own
The faith I plight to her was giv'n to you.
I might remind you that our fathers form'd
These ties at Troy without consulting us,
And we were bound together by no love
Or choice of ours; but 'tis enough for me
That I submitted. My ambassadors
Made you the promise of my heart and hand;
So far from wishing to revoke the pledge,
I willingly confirm'd it; you, with them,
Came hither, and, altho' another eye
Already had subdued me and forestall'd
Your sway, that passion did not make me pause,
And I resolved still to be true to you.
I welcomed you as queen, and, till this day,
I thought my oath would hold the place of love.
But love prevail'd, and, by a fatal stroke,
Andromache has won the heart she hates:
Each drawn by th' other in our own despite,
We hasten to the altar, there to swear
Union for ever. Blame me as you may
For traitor, tho' a willing one I grieve
To prove defaulter; nor do I presume
To check the just resentment that relieves
Myself as much as you. Call me forsworn,
I fear your silence more than your reproach;
Wrung by the secret witness in my heart,
The less you say the more I feel my guilt.

HERMIONE

Sir, this confession, stripp'd of all deceit,
Shows that at least you to yourself are just;
And, tho' resolved to snap this solemn tie,
Crime makes you in your own eyes criminal.
Yet, after all, why should a conqueror stoop
To common honesty that keeps its word?
No, perfidy for you has secret charms;
You seek me but to glory in your shame;
Unhinder'd by your duty or your oath,
A maid of Greece and then a dame of Troy
Attract your fickle fancy, flying off,
Returning, and then leaving me once more;
Crowning in turn the princess and the slave,
Making Troy bow to Greece, and Greece to Troy!
Thus acts a heart that's master of itself,
Heroic, and no slave of promises!
Your bride might be displeased were I to stint
Such honey'd terms as wretch and perjurer.
You came to look whether my face were pale,
And then to mock my sorrow in her arms.
You would be glad if I would follow her
In tears; but one day has brought joy enough.
You need not seek new titles to renown,
Those that you have may well suffice your greed,
The aged sire of Hector smitten down
Dying before the eyes of all his kin,
While your sword, thrust into his feeble heart,
Seeks the few frozen drops that linger there;
Troy all in flames, plunged in a sea of blood;
Your hand too cut Polyxena's fair throat,
A cruel sight that Greece herself condemn'd.
Such glorious deeds claim fit acknowledgment.

PYRRHUS

I know full well to what excess of rage
Revenge for Helen's rape transported me:
To you, her child, I might impute the blood
That I have shed; but be the past forgot.

I thank high Heaven that your indifference
Sanctions a happier passion in my breast.
My heart, too ready to torment itself,
Should know you better, and excuse its change.
Madam, I did you wrong to feel remorse;
Can one be faithless who was never loved?
You have not tried to keep me bound to you:
Fearing to injure, it may be that I
Serve you. No sympathy unites our hearts;
'Twas duty that I follow'd, as did you:
You never loved me in reality.

HERMIONE

I never loved you! What then did I do?
For you our native princes I despised,
Sought you myself in your remotest realms;
Still am I here, tho' you have proved untrue,
And all my Greeks my weakness view with shame.
I have commanded them to hide my wrongs;
In secret I awaited your return
To duty; trusting, whether soon or late,
You would bring back a heart I claim'd as mine.
I loved you tho' inconstant; could I more
If faithful found? E'en while your cruel lips
Calmly announce the death of all my hopes,
I doubt if I have ceased to love you yet.
But if it must be so, and Heav'n in wrath
Reserves for other eyes the pow'r to charm,
Complete this marriage; but at least refrain
From forcing me to witness my disgrace.
Listen, for this may be my last appeal;
Let one day pass, to-morrow you shall wed—
You answer nought? Ah, faithless wretch, 'tis clear
You count those moments lost you spend with me!
Impatient your enchantress to behold
Once more, you grudge with others to converse:
With her your heart inspires each word, each look.
Escape where you are free, I hold you not
From going; swear as you have sworn to me.

Go, and profane the majesty of Heav'n,
The justice of the gods, who'll ne'er forget
How those same oaths have bound you to myself.
Haste, to their altars take that perjured heart;
There dread to meet Hermione once more.

Forgetful of friendship, duty and honor, Orestes kills the King and returns to Hermione for his reward. Pylades is the friend of Orestes:

ORESTES

Madam, 'tis over, and your will is done;
Yes, at the altar now the traitor yields
His life.

HERMIONE

Is Pyrrhus dead?

ORESTES

He breathes his last,
Our Greeks have blotted out his guilt in blood.
I gave my promise, tho' this plot to me
Appear'd too horrible. With hasty steps
I sought the temple, when I found our men
Had to the very altar crept unseen
Amid the crowd. With countenance unchanged,
Pyrrhus perceived me, and his courage seem'd
Warm'd at the sight; Greece, in my person braved,
Lending fresh glory to his nuptial rites.
Proudly he raised on high the diadem,
And placed it on the Trojan woman's brow
With his own hand, saying: "I give to you
My crown, and plight my troth; reign o'er my realms
And o'er myself; your son shall find in me
A father's love; may Heav'n confirm the vow
I make to you his mother, and his foes
Be mine. I hail him as the King of Troy."
Applause resounded as he spake these words,
Answer'd by cries of wrath from Grecian throats.
They throng'd around the traitor where he stood,

So that I found no place to strike, for each
Vied with his neighbor who should lay him low.
Cover'd with blood, vainly he sought escape
From countless blows, and at the altar fell.
Thence passing thro' the terror-stricken crowds,
I came, to bring my princess to the port.
There will our friends, their hands with slaughter red,
Be with us soon. My promise is fulfill'd.

HERMIONE

What have they done?

ORESTES

If their excess of zeal
Has marr'd your vengeance, pardon them for that.
You would have had me be the first to strike,
That he might feel it was for you he died;
But 'twas my ardor prompted them to act;
For your sake, and yours only, were they brought
Within the temple; you may justly claim
As sacrificed to you the life they took,
As agents of the vengeance you had plann'd.

HERMIONE

Traitor, be silent, nor impute to me
The crime which brands you coward. Let the Greeks
Applaud the impious act. Go; I disown
Your cruelty and you, who have destroy'd
The noblest of mankind this fatal day.
Did no compunction visit your fell hearts
To check such slaughter? Who made you the judge
To sentence him to death? What was his crime?
What right had you to slay him? Tell me that!
Who bade you do it?

ORESTES

Heav'ns! It was you yourself,
Just now, upon this spot, the order gave.

HERMIONE

You should have paid no heed to love bereft
Of reason, but have read my deeper thoughts.
Saw you not while I raved distractedly,

My heart belied whatever words I spoke?
E'en had I meant them, you should have refused,
A hundred times repeated, such a wish:
Ask'd me again before the blow was struck,
And then return'd, or rather shunn'd my sight.
You should have let me wreak my own revenge.
What lured you hither, hateful to mine eyes?
Behold what bitter fruit your love has borne!
You bring me all the ills that follow you:
Your embassy it was, fatal to both,
That to my rival made his thoughts incline,
He might have else admitted me to share
His heart again, or feign'd at least to love.
Go you, in this Epirus I will stay.
Greece and my Spartan home I here renounce,
Yea, all my family; enough for me
That they have bred a monster like yourself!

ORESTES [*Exit* HERMIONE.

Was that Hermione I saw and heard?
She for whom flow'd the blood that I have shed?
Did she not call me traitor, murderer?
Am I Orestes? And is Pyrrhus slain?
Was reason's light extinguish'd in my heart
That I should kill a king whom I revere,
In one day violate a sovereign's rights,
An envoy's office, and all human ties,
Profane the altars where he stood at bay,
And turn a sacrilegious regicide?
And all for one who knows no gratitude,
Who made me vow to slay him, or she ne'er
Would see me more. When I have done the task
Her fury set, she taunts me with his blood!
She loves him! As a monster looks on me!
Far from mine eyes for ever she withdraws,
And in her thankless flight leaves me for hire
Names of reproach, incurr'd to please her rage!

VIII. "PHEDRE." Like *Andromache, Phedre* is an imitation of Euripides, this time

of his *Hippolytus,* and was borrowed likewise from a play by Seneca. Racine modifies the ancient tale by making the Nurse and not Phedre herself the author of the calumny that brought death to Hippolytus, by introducing the imaginary Aricia and giving her a part in the plot, and by making Phedre die of poison taken by herself before she exonerated Hippolytus.

Phedre dominates the whole play, and the other characters appear to exist only for the purpose of aiding in the delineation of her character. Love and jealousy create a tempest of passion which tears her soul in tatters, and in the remorse that follows she finds no relief from its ravages. Here is a tremendous study of the psychology of passion which exhibits the power of Racine as no other play does, yet in the overwhelming personality of Phedre appears the morbid conflicts of a diseased and horror-stricken mind.

Theseus, King of Athens and son of Aegeus, is away from home, and during his absence Phedre, his wife and daughter of Minos and Pasiphaë, falls madly in love with her step-son Hippolytus, whose mother was Antiope, Queen of the Amazons. The young man, however, has set his heart on Aricia, Princess of the blood royal of Athens, and the slave of Theseus.

Word is brought to Troezen, a town in the Peloponnesus, the scene of the play, that Theseus is dead. Hippolytus promises Aricia his aid in recovering the throne and professes

his love. Phedre, believing her husband dead, declares her unholy passion, and when she is rebuked by Hippolytus, begs him to slay her or to give his sword that she may take her own life. A messenger announces that the Athenians have elected her son king and have placed the reins of government in her hands.

The rumor proves false, and Theseus returns. When Phedre would slay herself in despair, her nurse, Oenone, suggests that she charge Hippolytus with showing love for his step-mother. The suspicions of Theseus are aroused, and Hippolytus trembles in terror.

The powerful fourth act is as follows:

Scene 1

THESEUS, OENONE

THESEUS

Ah! What is this I hear! Presumptuous traitor!
And would he have disgraced his father's honor?
With what relentless footsteps Fate pursues me!
Whither I go I know not, nor where now
I am. O kind affection ill repaid!
Audacious scheme! Abominable thought!
To reach the object of his foul desire
The wretch disdain'd not to use violence.
I know this sword that served him in his fury,
The sword I gave him for a nobler use.
Could not the sacred ties of blood restrain him?
And Phedre,—was she loath to have him punish'd?
She held her tongue. Was that to spare the culprit?

OENONE

Nay, but to spare a most unhappy father.
O'erwhelm'd with shame that her eyes should have kindled
So infamous a flame and prompted him

To crime so heinous, Phedre would have died.
I saw her raise her arm, and ran to save her.
To me alone you owe it that she lives;
And, in my pity both for her and you,
Have I against my will interpreted
Her tears.

THESEUS

The traitor! He might well turn pale.
'Twas fear that made him tremble when he saw me.
I was astonish'd that he show'd no pleasure;
His frigid greeting chill'd my tenderness.
But was this guilty passion that devours him
Declared already ere I banish'd him
From Athens?

OENONE

Sire, remember how the Queen
Urged you. Illicit love caused all her hatred.

THESEUS

And then this fire broke out again at Troezen?

OENONE

Sire, I have told you all. Too long the Queen
Has been allow'd to bear her grief alone.
Let me now leave you and attend to her.

Scene 2

THESEUS, HIPPOLYTUS

THESEUS

Ah! There he is. Great gods! That noble mien
Might well deceive an eye less fond than mine!
Why should the sacred stamp of virtue gleam
Upon the forehead of an impious wretch?
Ought not the blackness of a traitor's heart
To show itself by sure and certain signs?

HIPPOLYTUS

My father, may I ask what fatal cloud
Has troubled your majestic countenance?
Dare you not trust this secret to your son?

THESEUS

Traitor, how dare you show yourself before me?
Monster, whom Heaven's bolts have spared too long!
Survivor of that robber crew whereof
I cleansed the earth. After your brutal lust
Scorn'd even to respect my marriage bed,
You venture—you, my hated foe—to come
Into my presence, here, where all is full
Of your foul infamy, instead of seeking
Some unknown land that never heard my name.
Fly, traitor, fly! Stay not to tempt the wrath
That I can scarce restrain, nor brave my hatred.
Disgrace enough have I incurr'd for ever
In being father of so vile a son,
Without your death staining indelibly
The glorious record of my noble deeds.
Fly, and unless you wish quick punishment
To add you to the criminals cut off
By me, take heed this sun that lights us now
Ne'er see you more set foot upon this soil.
I tell you once again,—fly, haste, return not,
Rid all my realms of your atrocious presence.
To thee, to thee, great Neptune, I appeal;
If erst I clear'd thy shores of foul assassins,
Recall thy promise to reward those efforts,
Crown'd with success, by granting my first pray'r.
Confined for long in close captivity,
I have not yet call'd on thy pow'rful aid,
Sparing to use the valued privilege
Till at mine utmost need. The time is come,
I ask thee now. Avenge a wretched father!
I leave this traitor to thy wrath; in blood
Quench his outrageous fires, and by thy fury
Theseus will estimate thy favor tow'rds him.

HIPPOLYTUS

Phedre accuses me of lawless passion!
This crowning horror all my soul confounds;
Such unexpected blows, falling at once,
O'erwhelm me, choke my utterance, strike me dumb.

THESEUS

Traitor, you reckon'd that in timid silence
Phedre would bury your brutality,
You should not have abandon'd in your flight
The sword that in her hands helps to condemn you
Or rather, to complete your perfidy,
You should have robb'd her both of speech and life.

HIPPOLYTUS

Justly indignant at a lie so black
I might be pardon'd if I told the truth;
But it concerns your honor to conceal it.
Approve the reverence that shuts my mouth;
And, without wishing to increase your woes,
Examine closely what my life has been.
Great crimes are never single, they are link'd
To former faults. He who has once transgress'd
May violate at last all that men hold
Most sacred; vice, like virtue, has degrees
Of progress; innocence was never seen
To sink at once into the lowest depths
Of guilt. No virtuous man can in a day
Turn traitor, murderer, an incestuous wretch.
The nursling of a chaste, heroic mother,
I have not proved unworthy of my birth,
Pittheus, whose wisdom is by all esteem'd,
Deign'd to instruct me when I left her hands.
It is no wish of mine to vaunt my merits,
But, if I may lay claim to any virtue,
I think beyond all else I have display'd
Abhorrence of those sins with which I'm charged.
For this Hippolytus is known in Greece,
So continent that he is deem'd austere.
All know my abstinence inflexible:
The daylight is not purer than my heart.
How then could I, burning with fire profane—

THESEUS

Yes, dastard, 'tis that very pride condemns you.
I see the odious reason of your coldness:
Phedre alone bewitch'd your shameless eyes;

Your soul, to others' charms indifferent,
Disdain'd the blameless fires of lawful love.

HIPPOLYTUS

No, father, I have hidden it too long,
This heart has not disdain'd a sacred flame.
Here at your feet I own my real offense:
I love, and love in truth where you forbid me;
Bound to Aricia by my heart's devotion,
The child of Pallas has subdued your son.
A rebel to your laws, her I adore,
And breathe forth ardent sighs for her alone.

THESEUS

You love her? Heav'ns!
But no, I see the trick.
You feign a crime to justify yourself.

HIPPOLYTUS

Sir, I have shunn'd her for six months, and still
Love her. To you yourself I came to tell it,
Trembling the while. Can nothing clear your mind
Of your mistake? What oath can reassure you?
By heav'n and earth and all the pow'rs of nature—

THESEUS

The wicked never shrink from perjury.
Cease, cease, and spare me irksome protestations,
If your false virtue has no other aid.

HIPPOLYTUS

Tho' it to you seem false and insincere,
Phedre has secret cause to know it true.

THESEUS

Ah! how your shamelessness excites my wrath!

HIPPOLYTUS

What is my term and place of banishment?

THESEUS

Were you beyond the Pillars of Alcides,
Your perjured presence were too near me yet.

HIPPOLYTUS

What friends will pity me, when you forsake
And think me guilty of a crime so vile?

THESEUS

Go, look you out for friends who hold in honor
Adultery and clap their hands at incest,
Low, lawless traitors, steep'd in infamy,
The fit protectors of a knave like you.

HIPPOLYTUS

Are incest and adultery the words
You cast at me? I hold my tongue. Yet think
What mother Phedre had; too well you know
Her blood, not mine, is tainted with those horrors.

THESEUS

What! Does your rage before my eyes lose all
Restraint? For the last time,—out of my sight!
Hence, traitor! Wait not till a father's wrath
Force thee away 'mid general execration.

Scene 3

THESEUS (*alone*)

Wretch! Thou must meet inevitable ruin.
Neptune has sworn by Styx—to gods themselves
A dreadful oath,—and he will execute
His promise. Thou canst not escape his vengeance.
I loved thee; and, in spite of thine offense,
My heart is troubled by anticipation
For thee. But thou hast earn'd thy doom too well.
Had father ever greater cause for rage?
Just gods, who see the grief that overwhelms me,
Why was I cursed with such a wicked son?

Scene 4

PHEDRE, THESEUS

PHEDRE

My lord, I come to you, fill'd with just dread.
Your voice raised high in anger reach'd mine ears,
And much I fear that deeds have follow'd threats.
Oh, if there yet is time, spare your own offspring,
Respect your race and blood, I do beseech you.
Let me not hear that blood cry from the ground;
Save me the horror and perpetual pain
Of having caused his father's hand to shed it.

THESEUS

No, Madam, from that stain my hand is free
But, for all that, the wretch has not escaped me.
The hand of an Immortal now is charged
With his destruction. 'Tis a debt that Neptune
Owes me, and you shall be avenged.

PHEDRE

A debt
Owed you? Pray'rs made in anger—

THESEUS

Never fear
That they will fail. Rather join yours to mine.
In all their blackness paint for me his crimes,
And fan my tardy passion to white heat.
But yet you know not all his infamy;
His rage against you overflows in slanders;
Your mouth, he says, is full of all deceit,
He says Aricia has his heart and soul,
That her alone he loves.

PHEDRE

Aricia?

THESEUS

Ay,
He said it to my face: an idle pretext!
A trick that gulls me not! Let us hope Neptune
Will do him speedy justice. To his altars
I go, to urge performance of his oaths.

Scene 5

PHEDRE (*alone*)

Ah, he is gone! What tidings struck mine ears?
What fire, half smother'd, in my heart revives?
What fatal stroke falls like a thunderbolt?
Stung by remorse that would not let me rest,
I tore myself out of Oenone's arms,
And flew to help Hippolytus with all
My soul and strength. Who knows if that repentance
Might not have moved me to accuse myself?
And, if my voice had not been choked with shame,

Perhaps I had confess'd the frightful truth.
Hippolytus can feel, but not for me!
Aricia has his heart, his plighted troth.
Ye gods, when, deaf to all my sighs and tears,
He arm'd his eye with scorn, his brow with threats,
I deem'd his heart, impregnable to love,
Was fortified 'gainst all my sex alike.
And yet another has prevail'd to tame
His pride, another has secured his favor.
Perhaps he has a heart easily melted;
I am the only one he cannot bear!
And shall I charge myself with his defense?

Scene 6

PHEDRE, OENONE

PHEDRE

Know you, dear Nurse, what I have learn'd just now?

OENONE

No; but I come in truth with trembling limbs.
I dreaded with what purpose you went forth,
The fear of fatal madness made me pale.

PHEDRE

Who would have thought it, Nurse? I had a rival.

OENONE

A rival?

PHEDRE

Yes, he loves. I cannot doubt it.
This wild untamable Hippolytus,
Who scorn'd to be admired, whom lovers' sighs
Wearied, this tiger, whom I fear'd to rouse,
Fawns on a hand that has subdued his pride:
Aricia has found entrance to his heart.

OENONE

Aricia?

PHEDRE

Ah! anguish as yet untried!
For what new tortures am I still reserved?
All I have undergone, transports of passion,
Longings and fears, the horrors of remorse,
The shame of being spurn'd with contumely,

Were feeble foretastes of my present torments.
They love each other! By what secret charm
Have they deceived me? Where, and when, and how
Met they? You knew it all. Why was I cozen'd?
You never told me of those stolen hours
Of amorous converse. Have they oft been seen
Talking together? Did they seek the shades
Of thickest woods? Alas! full freedom had they
To see each other. Heav'n approved their sighs;
They loved without the consciousness of guilt;
And every morning's sun for them shone clear,
While I, an outcast from the face of Nature,
Shunn'd the bright day, and sought to hide myself.
Death was the only god whose aid I dared
To ask: I waited for the grave's release.
Water'd with tears, nourish'd with gall, my woe
Was all too closely watch'd; I did not dare
To weep without restraint. In mortal dread
Tasting this dangerous solace, I disguised
My terror 'neath a tranquil countenance,
And oft had I to check my tears, and smile.

OENONE

What fruit will they enjoy of their vain love?
They will not see each other more.

PHEDRE

That love
Will last forever. Even while I speak,
Ah, fatal thought, they laugh to scorn the madness
Of my distracted heart. In spite of exile
That soon must part them, with a thousand oaths
They seal yet closer union. Can I suffer
A happiness, Oenone, which insults me?
I crave your pity. She must be destroy'd.
My husband's wrath against a hateful stock
Shall be revived, nor must the punishment
Be light: the sister's guilt passes the brothers'.
I will entreat him in my jealous rage.
What am I saying? Have I lost my senses?
Is Phedre jealous, and will she implore

Theseus for help? My husband lives, and yet
I burn. For whom? Whose heart is this I claim
As mine? At every word I say, my hair
Stands up with horror. Guilt henceforth has pass'd
All bounds. Hypocrisy and incest breathe
At once thro' all. My murderous hands are ready
To spill the blood of guileless innocence.
Do I yet live, wretch that I am, and dare
To face this holy Sun from whom I spring?
My father's sire was king of all the gods;
My ancestors fill all the universe.
Where can I hide? In the dark realms of Pluto?
But there my father holds the fatal urn;
His hand awards th' irrevocable doom:
Minos is judge of all the ghosts in hell.
Ah! how his awful shade will start and shudder
When he shall see his daughter brought before him,
Forced to confess sins of such varied dye,
Crimes it may be unknown to hell itself!
What wilt thou say, my father, at a sight
So dire? I think I see thee drop the urn,
And, seeking some unheard-of punishment,
Thyself become my executioner.
Spare me! A cruel goddess has destroy'd
Thy race; and in my madness recognize
Her wrath. Alas! My aching heart has reap'd
No fruit of pleasure from the frightful crime
The shame of which pursues me to the grave,
And ends in torment life-long misery.

OENONE

Ah, Madam, pray dismiss a groundless dread:
Look less severely on a venial error.
You love. We cannot conquer destiny.
You were drawn on as by a fatal charm.
Is that a marvel without precedent
Among us? Has love triumph'd over you,
And o'er none else? Weakness is natural
To man. A mortal, to a mortal's lot
Submit. You chafe against a yoke that others

Have long since borne. The dwellers in Olympus,
The gods themselves, who terrify with threats
The sins of men, have burn'd with lawless fires.

PHEDRE

What words are these I hear? What counsel this
You dare to give me? Will you to the end
Pour poison in mine ears? You have destroy'd me.
You brought me back when I should else have quitted
The light of day, made me forget my duty
And see Hippolytus, till then avoided.
What hast thou done? Why did your wicked mouth
With blackest lies slander his blameless life?
Perhaps you've slain him, and the impious pray'r
Of an unfeeling father has been answer'd.
No, not another word! Go, hateful monster;
Away, and leave me to my piteous fate.
May Heav'n with justice pay you your deserts!
And may your punishment forever be
A terror to all those who would, like you,
Nourish with artful wiles the weaknesses
Of princes, push them to the brink of ruin
To which their heart inclines, and smooth the path
Of guilt. Such flatterers doeth the wrath of Heav'n
Bestow on kings as its most fatal gift.

OENONE (*alone*)

O gods! to serve her what have I not done?
This is the due reward that I have won.

Hippolytus plans to wed Aricia, but is killed in a runaway. Oenone casts herself into the sea. Aricia defends Hippolytus, and Theseus is convinced of the innocence of his son just before he learns of the latter's death. Phedre dies of self-administered poison after she has cleared the memory of Hippolytus, and Theseus adopts Aricia.

IX. "ATHALIAH." The fine drama which bears the name *Athalie* was the author's last

great effort, and deservedly ranks as one of his three masterpieces. Into the scriptural narrative Racine introduced few changes, and only such as increased the dramatic interest of the plot without perverting the sacred story. Grandeur and beauty unite in flawless accord in this remarkable play, whose scene is laid in the Temple at Jerusalem, where the solemnity and awfulness of the surroundings contribute to the majesty of the action. Here God himself is the great leader, replacing Fate, which ruled the Greek drama. All Racine's religious feelings are thrown into the motive, and all his genius into the composition of the lyrics of the chorus and the lyrical measures of the high-priest's prophecies.

Jehoiada, the high-priest, and his wife Jehosheba have concealed from every one the fact that a rightful king of Judah, a lineal descendant of David, is in existence. Abner, one of the chief officers of the royal court, bewails the power of Queen Athaliah and her apostate friends.

Athaliah dreams of retribution against her at the hands of a youth, and in Joash, the supposed son of Jehoiada, sees the fulfillment of her vision. When she offers him her protection and a home with wealth and ease, he declines and brings the hatred of the Queen upon the high-priest and his wife.

Athaliah threatens the priests with destruction unless they give up Joash. The high-priest prepares to show Joash to the people

and prove to them that he is really their King, a descendant of David, saved from destruction and brought up secretly in the Temple.

The fourth act, as is usually the case, is the climax, and we give it in full below. Zachariah is the real son of Jehoiada and Jehosheba; Salome is the sister of Zachariah:

Scene 1

JOASH, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, A LEVITE, THE CHORUS

SALOME

With step majestic, by my mother's side,
Comes with my brother young Eliakim.
Sisters, what bear they wrapp'd within those veils?
What means that sword carried in front of them?

JEHOSHEBA (*to* ZACHARIAH)

My son, with reverence on this table place
The awful volume of our holy Law.
And thou, my sweet Eliakim, lay here,
Close to the book of God, this diadem.
Levite, it is Jehoiada's command,
Let David's sword be placed beside his crown.

JOASH

Dear Princess, tell me, what new sight is this?
The sacred scroll, the sword, the diadem?
Since God within His Temple shelter'd me,
No preparation have I seen like this.

JEHOSHEBA

Soon will thy wondering doubts be clear'd, my son.

JOASH

Try not that diadem upon my brow!
'Tis profanation of the glorious dead!
The King who wore it claims more reverence.
A poor unhappy child, left for the bears—

JEHOSHEBA (*trying the crown upon him*)

Let be, my son: thus has it been enjoin'd.

JOASH

But do I hear thee sob? Princess, thy checks

Are wet with tears! What pity touches thee?
Am I, as Jephthah's daughter was of old,
To be presented for a sacrifice,
And, by my death, appease the wrath of God?
A son has naught his Father may not claim.
Ah me!

JEHOSHEBA

Lo, here is one who will declare God's will
To thee, alone: fear not.
Come, let us go.

Scene 2

JOASH, JEHOIADA

JOASH (*running into the high-priest's arms*)

Father!

JEHOIADA

My son!

JOASH

What preparation's here?

JEHOIADA

'Tis right, my son, that thou should'st know the truth,
And, sooner than all others, learn God's will,
His purpose for His people and for thee.
Arm thee with courage, and renew thy faith.
The time is come to prove that fervent zeal
Which I have cherish'd in thy heart with care,
And to discharge the debt due to thy God.
Art thou resolv'd to show a generous mind?

JOASH

Yea, ready if He will to give my life.

JEHOIADA

Oft hast thou heard the story of our kings;
Dost bear in mind, my son, how strict the laws
A king must follow, worthy of the crown?

JOASH

Wise kings, for thus hath God Himself declared,
Will not rely on riches and on gold,
But fear the Lord their God, regarding still
His precepts, and His judgments, and His laws,
Nor yoke oppressive on their brethren lay.

JEHOIADA

But wert thou bound to copy one such king,
Which would'st thou choose to imitate, my son?

JOASH

There seems to me none worthy to compare
With faithful David, full of love divine.

JEHOIADA

Thou would'st not follow then the erring steps
Of faithless Joram and his impious son?

JOASH

Father!

JEHOIADA

Proceed, and tell me all thy mind.

JOASH

Whoso resembles them perish as they!
(JEHOIADA *prostrates himself at his feet.*)
Father, why dost thou kneel before my face?

JEHOIADA

I pay thee the respect I owe my King.
Joash, prove worthy of thine ancestor,
Of David.

JOASH

Am I Joash?

JEHOIADA

Thou shalt know
How graciously God foil'd the savage plot
Of Athaliah, saving thee from death,
Already with the dagger in thy breast.
Nor from her fury art thou yet escaped:
With the same eagerness that would erewhile
Have slain in thee her son's posterity,
Her cruelty is bent on thy destruction,
Nor does a change of name elude pursuit.
But 'neath thy standard I have gather'd here,
Prompt to avenge thee, an obedient band.
Enter, brave captains of the holy seed,
Honor'd by sacred service in your turns.

Scene 3

JEHOIADA, JOASH, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL AND THE THREE OTHER CHIEFS OF THE LEVITES

JEHOIADA (*continues*)

Lo there, the King's avengers 'gainst his foes!
And there, ye priests, behold your promised King!

AZARIAH

Why, 'tis Eliakim!

ISHMAEL

Is that sweet child—

JEHOIADA

The rightful heir of Judah's kings, the last
Of hapless Ahaziah's lineage,
Call'd by the name of Joash, as ye know.
All Judah, like yourselves, bewail'd the fate
Of that fair tender flow'r so soon cut down,
Believing him with all his brethren slain.
With them he met the traitor's cruel knife:
But Heaven turn'd aside the mortal stroke,
Kept in his heart the smoldering spark of life,
And let my wife, eluding watchful eyes,
Convey him in her bosom, bathed in blood,
And hide him in the Temple with his nurse,
I being sole accomplice of her theft.

JOASH

Ah, how, my father, can I e'er repay
The kindness and the love so freely giv'n?

JEHOIADA

The time will come to prove that gratitude.
Look then upon your King, your only hope!
My care has been to keep him for this hour;
Servants of God, 'tis yours that care to crown.
The child of Jezebel, the murderess queen,
Inform'd that Joash lives, will soon be here,
Opening for him the tomb a second time,
His death determined, though himself unknown.
Priests, 'tis for you her fury to forestall,
And Judah's shameful slavery to end,
Avenge your princes slain, your Law restore,

Make Benjamin and Judah own their King.
The enterprise, no doubt, is dangerous,
Attacking a proud Queen upon her throne,
Who rallies to her standard a vast host
Of hardy strangers and of faithless Jews:
But He who guides and strengthens me is God.
Think, on this child all Israel's hope depends.
The wrath of God already marks the Queen;
Here have I muster'd you, in her despite,
Nor lack ye warlike arms as she believes.
Haste, crown we Joash, and proclaim him King,
Then, our new Prince's valiant soldiers, march,
Calling on Him with Whom all victory lies,
And, waking loyalty in slumbering hearts,
E'en to her palace track our enemy.
What hearts, so sunk in sloth's inglorious sleep,
Will not be roused to follow in our steps,
When in our sacred ranks they see advance
A King whom God has at His altar fed,
Aaron's successor, and a train of priests
Leading to battle Levi's progeny,
And in those self-same hands, by all revered,
The arms that David hallow'd to the Lord?
Our God shall spread His terror o'er His foes.
Shrink not from bathing you in heathen blood;
Hew down the Tyrians, yea, and Jacob's seed.
Are ye not from those famous Levites sprung
Who, when inconstant Israel wickedly
At Sinai worship'd the Egyptian god,
Their dearest kinsmen slew with righteous zeal,
And sanctified their hands in traitors' blood,
Gaining the honor, by this noble deed,
Of serving at the altars of the Lord?
But I perceive your zeal already fired;
Swear then upon this holy volume, first,
Before this King whom Heav'n restores to-day,
To live, to fight, yea, or to die for him!

AZARIAH

Here swear we, for ourselves and brethren all,

To establish Joash on his father's throne,
Nor, having taken in our hands the sword,
To lay it down till we have slain his foes.
If any one of us should break this vow,
Let him, great God, and let his children feel
Thy vengeance, from Thine heritage shut out,
And number'd with the dead disown'd by Thee!

JEHOIADA

And thou, my King, wilt thou not swear to be
Faithful to this eternal Law of God?

JOASH

How could I ever wish to disobey?

JEHOIADA

My son,—once more to call thee by that name,—
Suffer this fondness, and forgive the tears
Prompted by too well founded fears for thee.
Far from the throne, in ignorance brought up
Of all the poisonous charms of royalty,
Thou knowest not th' intoxicating fumes
Of pow'r uncurb'd, and flattery's magic spells;
Soon will she whisper that the holiest laws,
Tho' governing the herd, must kings obey;
A monarch owns no bridle but his will;
All else must bow before his majesty;
Subjects are rightly doom'd to toil and tears,
And with a rod of iron should be ruled,
For they will crush him if they be not crush'd.
Thus will fresh pitfalls for your feet be dug,
New snares be spread to spoil your innocence,
Till they have made you hate the truth at last,
By painting virtue in repulsive guise.
Alas! our wisest king was led astray.
Swear on this book, before these witnesses,
That God shall be thy first and constant care;
Scourge of the evil, refuge of the good,
That you will judge the poor as God directs;
Rememb'ring how, in simple linen clad,
Thou wast thyself a helpless orphan child.

JOASH

I promise to observe the Law's commands.
If I forsake Thee, punish me, my God!

JEHOIADA

I must anoint thee with the holy oil.
Jehosheba, thou mayest show thyself.

Scene 4

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL, THE THREE OTHER CHIEFS OF THE LEVITES, THE CHORUS

JEHOSHEBA (*embracing* JOASH)

My King, and son of David!

JOASH

Mother dear,
My only mother! Zachariah, come,
Embrace thy brother.

JEHOSHEBA (*to* ZACHARIAH)

Kneel before thy King.

(ZACHARIAH *casts himself at the feet of* JOASH.)

JEHOIADA (*while they embrace one another*)

My children be united ever thus!

JEHOSHEBA (*to* JOASH)

Thou knowest then whose blood has giv'n thee life?

JOASH

And who had robb'd me of it, but for thee.

JEHOSHEBA

I then may call thee Joash, thy true name.

JOASH

And thee shall Joash never cease to love.

THE CHORUS

Why, there is—

JEHOSHEBA

Joash.

JEHOIADA

Hear this messenger.

Scene 5

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL, THE THREE OTHER CHIEFS OF THE LEVITES, A LEVITE, THE CHORUS

A LEVITE

I know not what their impious plan may be,
But everywhere resounds the threatening trump,
And amid standards fires are seen to shine;
The Queen is doubtless mustering her troops;
Already, every way of succor closed,
The sacred mount on which the Temple stands
Insolent Tyrians on all sides invest;
And one of these blasphemers now brings word
That Abner is in chains, so cannot help.

JEHOSHEBA (*to* JOASH)

Ah! dearest child, by Heav'n in vain restored,
Alas! for safety I can do no more.
God has forgotten David and his seed!

JEHOIADA (*to* JEHOSHEBA)

Dost thou not fear to draw the wrath divine
Down on thyself, and on the King thou lovest?
And e'en tho' God should snatch him from thine arms,
And will that David's house perish with him,
Art thou not here upon the holy hill,
Where Abraham our father raised his hand
Obediently to slay his blameless son,
Nor murmur'd as he to the altar bound
The fruit of his old age; leaving to God
Fulfillment of His promise, though this son
Held in himself the hope of all his race?
Friends, let us take our several posts: the side
That looks towards the east let Ishmael guard;
Guard thou the north; thou, west; and thou the south.
Take heed that no one, with imprudent zeal,
Levite or priest, unmasking my designs,
Burst forth in headlong haste before the time;
Let each, as with one common will inspired,
Wherever placed, till death his post maintain.
Our foes regard you, in their blinded rage,

As timid flocks for slaughter set aside,
And think that ye will scatter in dismay.
Let Azariah on the King attend.

(*To* JOASH)

Come, precious scion of a vigorous stock,
And with fresh courage thy defenders fill;
Come, don the diadem before their eyes,
And die, if it must be so, like a King.

(*To* JEHOSHEBA)

Follow him, Princess.

(*To a* LEVITE)

Give me thou those arms.

(*To the* CHORUS)

Offer to God the tears of innocence.

Scene 6

SALOME, THE CHORUS

ALL THE CHORUS *sings.*

Go forth, ye sons of Aaron, go:
Never did cause of greater fame
The spirit of your sires inflame.
Go forth, ye sons of Aaron, go:
'Tis for your God and King this day ye strike the blow.

ONE VOICE (*alone*)

'Tis against Thee that in this fray,
The wicked set the arrow to the bow;
"Let us destroy His feasts," say they,
"No longer let the earth His worship show;
Nor his vexatious yoke let mortals longer know.
His altars overturn, His votaries slay,
Till of His name and glory
Remains not e'en the story;
Of Him and His Anointed break the sway."

ALL THE CHORUS

Hast Thou no shafts in store,
That Justice may let fly?
Art Thou the jealous God no more,
No longer God of Vengeance throned on high?

ONE VOICE (*alone*)

Sad relic of our kings,
Last precious blossom of a stem so fair,
Ah! will the knife this time refuse to spare,
Which to his breast a cruel parent brings?
Tell us, sweet Prince, if o'er thy cradle hovered
Some Angel that protected thee from death?
Or did thy lifeless form in darkness covered,
At God's awakening voice resume its breath?

ANOTHER VOICE

Great God, dost Thou the guilt upon him lay,
That his rebellious sires forsook Thy way?
Is Thy compassion then clean gone for aye?

THE CHORUS

Where, God of Jacob, is Thy goodness fled?
Wilt Thou no more Thy gracious pardon shed?

ONE OF THE MAIDENS OF THE CHORUS

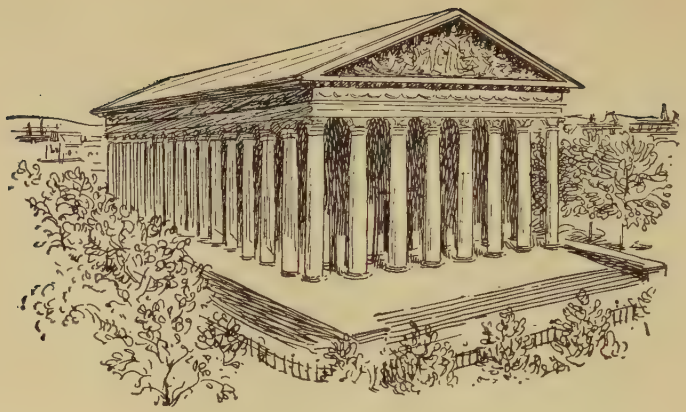
(*speaking, not singing*)

Dear sisters, cruel Tyrians hem us round,
Do ye not hear their trumpets' dreadful sound?

SALOME

Yea, and I hear them raise their savage cry;
I tremble with alarm;
Haste, let us to our place of refuge fly,
Where God's Almighty Arm
Shall in His Temple shelter us from harm.

Athaliah, induced by stratagem to enter the Temple, is convinced of the righteousness of the claim of Joash, the people joyously acclaim the newly-anointed King, Athaliah is slain, and Joash reigns.



CHAPTER XVI

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV (CONCLUDED)
THE GREAT PREACHERS

CHURCH AND STATE. Throughout this epoch the Roman Catholic Church was supreme in France, and whatever important controversies arose were within itself. Louis XIV was a man with a tender conscience, if we may judge by the condemnation he passed upon himself for his sins, but it was not a conscience that drove him to reform in his private life. He could feel a burning regret for past sins, but could enjoy the commission of new ones with corresponding zest; in fact, a period of rest from his vices seemed to increase their charm. He was a constant attendant upon religious services, and listened to the eloquence of his great preachers with an attentiveness that gave them the strongest support possible and induced in his court a like affec-

tation of devotion. If on the same day that he was moved by the eloquence of Bourdaloue he listened with equal delight to a tragedy by Racine, that was only an evidence of the popularity of eloquence, oratory and dramatic fervor. The feeling was strong throughout France that the King and the Church were one, and that prosperity could only be found in preserving that unity. *"Une foi, une loi, une roi"* (One faith, one law, one King) was the summary often expressed of the religious, social and political beliefs of the nation. Encouraged by such a combination of circumstances, the preachers of this age, permitted to say whatever they pleased and applauded for imagination, beauty and eloquence in their discourses, achieved the distinction, which later ages have confirmed, of being the greatest and most eloquent prelates of modern times. Three of the court preachers carried their eloquence to a high degree of perfection, satisfied their refined and critical audiences, and moved the King to tears: Bossuet, who appealed to the conscience through the imagination; Bourdaloue, who made his demands upon the judgment; and Massillon, who roused the emotions. The most distinguished was Bossuet.

II. Bossuet. The greatest French pulpit orator, Jacques Benigne Bossuet, was born in 1627 in Dijon, the capital of Burgundy. The Bossuet family belonged to the higher ranks of the bourgeoisie, and had been connected with the legal profession through the father of

Jacques. Having been shriven for the priesthood when only eight years of age and having received his early education in the Jesuit College at Dijon, the young Bossuet went to Paris to the College of Navarre, where he proved an apt and capable student. In 1652 he was made a priest, and about this time was associated with the rebellious Prince of Condé, who, though barely twenty-six, was already celebrated. For nearly forty years this friendship continued, and the last funeral oration which Bossuet pronounced was given seventeen years before his death in honor of his great friend.

For seven years he resided in Metz, a city which contained at that time devotees to three religions—Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. The young canon set himself the task of reconciling all to the Church, and succeeded in making a number of remarkable conversions. Perhaps the chief benefit to Bossuet from this controversy was the opportunity it gave him of becoming closely acquainted with the history and theology of the Jews, as well as with the history and articles of faith of the various types of Protestants. The unity of Church and State in France and the contemporaneous fall of the Commonwealth in England, with the expected collapse of the Reformation in that country, confirmed Bossuet's contention that harmony, unity and fixedness were the best evidences of truth, and he contended that the Roman Catholic Church was a harmonious

unit and had been fixed in doctrine from the beginning, while Protestantism was a heterogeneous compound of beliefs, changeable and recent. Even the Protestants admired the eloquence of the young prelate, and his distinction as a pulpit orator became so great that in 1661 he was made preacher to the court.

His rise thenceforward was rapid. His discourse on the conversion to the Catholic Church of Marshal Turenne secured for him the bishopric of Condon and gave him hopes for a cardinalate, in which, however, he was disappointed. Louis XIV was so pleased with him as a preacher and so confident of his character as a man that he entrusted to him the education of the Dauphin; and Bossuet, satisfied that he could not discharge the duties of the two positions properly, resigned his bishopric to devote himself exclusively to his young charge. The Dauphin reached maturity, and is known only as a dull and uninteresting, if not stupid, man, who never reigned, for he died before his father. The failure of Bossuet's instruction, however, should not be charged against him.

He was made a member of the *Academie Française,* and in 1680 left the Dauphin; a year later he was called to the bishopric of Meaux, where in this position he must have had his share in determining Louis to revoke the Edict of Nantes and prohibit the Protestant religion in France. Frequently engaged in controversies and not always with perfect success,

he in one instance at least achieved a complete victory, and that was in his opposition to Fenelon, who appeared to have a strong leaning toward quietism, which we shall discuss in another place. It is reported, however, that in this controversy the Pope, having in a message rebuked Fenelon in his own cathedral at Cambrai, remarked: "The archibishop of Cambrai sinned by too much love of God; the bishop of Meaux by too little love for his fellow man."

A model bishop, strict in morals and religious doctrine, admirable in private character and in the spiritual government of his flock, Bossuet devoted himself to the general interests of Catholicism almost to the time of his death, which occurred in April, 1704.

III. The Writings of Bossuet. Forty-one volumes were deemed necessary to contain the productions of Bossuet's prolific brain, but a very large portion of this matter belongs with theological writings, rather than with French literature as we are constrained to treat the latter. Not a little of it is in Latin rather than French, and time has made unimportant and useless the bulk of his productions; however, there is still a considerable quantity which, by its perfect form and its adaptability to present-day wants, is still familiar to the best of the educated French. These writings naturally divide themselves into three classes, the *Sermons,* the *Funeral Orations* and the *Discourse upon Universal History.*

1. *The Sermons.* Unfortunately but few of Bossuet's sermons have been preserved entire, many being largely fragmentary and a still greater number lost entirely. The great orator was so full of his theme, so rapid and passionate in his utterances, possessed so great a wealth of illustration and anecdote, and thought with such astonishing quickness and fertility that he could not confine himself to a manuscript, and his best efforts were never committed to writing. What examples we have, however, are full of a beautiful and striking imagery, in magnificently rounded and oratorical sentences, and when his majestic bearing, his melodious and powerful voice, combined with the grace and aptness of his gestures are considered, his power in the pulpit is easily understood. One great sermon on the unity of the Church is still preserved, as it alone seems to have been communicated to writing before it was delivered. The following brief extract gives but an inadequate conception of his eloquence:

When the time had come at which the Roman Empire of the West was to collapse and Gaul was to become France, God did not allow such a noble part of Christendom to remain long under idolatrous princes; and wishing to hand over to the kings of the French the keeping of his Church, which he had formerly intrusted to the emperors, he gave not to France only, but to the whole Western world, a new Constantine in the person of Clovis. The miraculous victory which he sent from heaven to each of these two princes in their wars was a pledge of his love, and the glorious inducement which attracted

them to Christianity. Faith triumphed, and the warlike nation of the Franks knew that the God of Clotilda was the true God of armies.

Then Saint Remi saw that by placing the kings of France and their people in the bosom of Jesus Christ, he had given to the Church a set of invincible protectors. This great saint, this new Samuel called to anoint the kings, anointed these, in his own words, "to be the perpetual defender of the Church and the poor:" a worthy object for royalty to pursue. After teaching them how to make churches flourish and populations thrive (believe ye that he himself is now speaking to you, as I only recite the fatherly words of this apostle of the French), day and night he prayed to God that they should persevere in His faith and reign according to the rules he had given them; assuring them at the same time that in enlarging their kingdom they would enlarge the kingdom of Christ, and that if they faithfully kept the laws he prescribed in the name of God, the empire of Rome would be given to them, so that from the kings of France would issue emperors worthy of that title, through whom Christ would reign.

Such were the blessings which a thousand and a thousand times the great Saint Remi poured upon the French and their kings, whom he always called his dear children; unceasingly praising God for his kindness, because, with a view to strengthen the incipient faith of this God-blessed nation, he had deigned, through his own sinner's hands (these are his own words), to repeat, before the eyes of all the French and of their king, the miracles which had burst upon the world in the early foundation of Christian churches. All the saints then living rejoiced; and in this decline of the Roman Empire, it seemed to them that there appeared in the kings of France "a new Light for the whole West."

2. *The Funeral Orations.* Bossuet delivered eleven funeral orations, one of which has been lost. Four were youthful efforts upon unim-

portant personages, but the six which remain are known as the great *Oraisons Funebres.* They are those on Henrietta, Queen of England; Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans; Maria Theresa of Spain, the Queen of France; Anne of Cleves; Michel Le Tellier, High Chancellor of France; and Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé. All were prepared with great care, were not delivered until some weeks after the death of the person, and then at the time when mass was said for the soul of the departed. Standing beside the bier, reviewing the achievements and portraying the characters of the deceased, he filled the minds of his hearers with a sense of the greatness and glory of life, while at the same time he preached the philosophy of death. They are not mere eulogies; some are great historical surveys made entirely from Bossuet's point of view, in which, for instance, Cromwell is a hypocrite and an impostor and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes the praiseworthy act of a great defender of the faith.

The oration on Henrietta, Queen of England, is considered Bossuet's masterpiece, presenting as it does in magnificent style an exposition of his political theories, combined with a clear and impressive account of the great English Revolution. In it he draws the character of Charles I and of Oliver Cromwell with a clearness and boldness not often seen, and if his regard for the one is too enthusiastic and his dislike of the other too strong, there is still

enough of truth in the characterizations to make them immortal.

The oration on Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, is in marked contrast, for here there is little of history and none of the political exposition which marked the other oration, but merely an eloquent account of an appalling domestic catastrophe, in which an admired and beloved personage, the center of a great court, is taken away by death so suddenly that foul play is more than suspected. Bossuet was a strong personal friend of the Duchess, and it is said that only a few hours before she died, knowing how little chance she had of recovery, she directed that after her death a beautiful emerald ring should be given to the great preacher. When in delivering the oration he spoke of the various and charming qualities of the Princess, he alluded to the prodigality of her charity. Then he proceeded, "And this art never deserted her, not even, I know it, in the throes of death," and at the same time, raising his right hand, he showed the jewel gleaming on one of his fingers.

When the Prince of Condé died, he had been against the King during the wars of the Fronde, and afterward, when all the others had submitted, he had remained in the hostile ranks of the Spaniards. It was a difficult situation in which Bossuet found himself placed, but he triumphed in a historical oration full of brilliant passages. Tracing the life of the Prince, he reached the point where Condé, still

a faithful subject, was thrown into prison by Cardinal Mazarin. Professing that he would prefer to keep eternally silent, yet feeling that he must speak out, he declared that until this fatal imprisonment his friend had not even dreamed that anything could be attempted against the State: "This is what made him say (I certainly can repeat here, before these altars, the words I received from his lips, since they so clearly show the bottom of his heart) — he said then, speaking of this unfortunate prison, that he had entered it the most innocent, and had left it the guiltiest of men."

The following extracts are from the oration on Henrietta, Queen of England, which was delivered in the church where Bossuet was preaching and in the presence of the Duke of Orleans, her son-in-law; it is he whom Bossuet addresses at the opening of the oration:

My Lord:

He who reigns in heaven and who is the Lord of all the empires, to whom alone majesty, glory, and independence belong, is also the only one who glories in dictating laws to kings, and in giving them, when it so pleases him, great and terrible lessons. Whether he raises or lowers thrones; whether he communicates his own power to princes, or reclaims it all and leaves them nothing but their own weakness, he teaches them their duties in a manner both sovereign and worthy of him; for when giving them his power, he commands them to use it, as he does, for the good of the world; and he shows them in withdrawing it that all their majesty is borrowed, and that, though seated on the throne, they are nevertheless under his hand and supreme authority. Thus does he teach princes, not only by words but by deeds and examples.

"'Et nunc, reges, intelligite; erudimini, qui judicatis terram.''

Christians, ye who have been called from all sides to this ceremony by the memory of a great Queen,—daughter, wife, mother of powerful kings and of sovereigns of three kingdoms,—this speech will bring before you one of those conspicuous examples which spread before the eyes of the world its absolute vanity. You will see in a single life all the extremes of human affairs: boundless felicity and boundless misery; a long and peaceful possession of one of the world's noblest crowns; all that can be given of the glories of birth and rank gathered upon a head which is afterwards exposed to all the insults of fortune; the good cause at first rewarded by success, then met by sudden turns and unheard-of changes; rebellion long restrained, at last overriding everything; unbridled licentiousness; the destruction of all laws; royal majesty insulted by crimes before unknown; usurpation and tyranny under the name of liberty; a Queen pursued by her enemies, and finding no refuge in either of her kingdoms; her own native land become a melancholy place of exile; many voyages across the sea undertaken by a princess, in spite of the tempest; the ocean surprised at being crossed so often, in such different ways, and for so different causes; a throne shamefully destroyed and miraculously restored. Those are the lessons which are given by God to the kings; thus does He show to the world the emptiness of its pomps and splendors. If I lack words, if expression is unable to do justice to a subject of such magnitude and loftiness, things alone will speak sufficiently; the heart of a great Queen, formerly raised by long years of prosperity and suddenly plunged into an abyss of bitterness, will speak loudly enough; and if private characters are not allowed to give lessons to princes upon such strange occurrences, a king lends me his voice to tell them.

But the wise and religious Princess who is the subject of this discourse was not simply a spectacle presented to them that they may study therein the counsels of Divine

Providence and the fatal revolutions of monarchies: she was her own instructor, while God instructed all princes through her example. I have said already that the Divine Lord teaches them both by giving and by taking away their power. The Queen of whom I speak understood one of these lessons as well as the other, contrary as they are, which means that in good as well as in evil fortune she behaved as a Christian. In the one she was charitable, in the other invincible. While prosperous she made her power felt by the world through infinite blessings; when fortune forsook her, she enlarged her own treasure of virtues, so that she lost for her own good this royal power which she had had for the good of others. And if her subjects, if her allies, if the Church Universal were the gainers by her greatness, she gained by her misfortunes and humiliations more than she had done by all her glory.

The following is descriptive of what Bossuet calls the Great Rebellion:

Charles I, King of England, was just, moderate, magnanimous, very well informed in regard to his affairs and to the arts of government; never was there a prince more able to make royalty not only venerable and holy, but also loved and cherished by his people. What fault can be found with him, save clemency? I am willing to say of him what a celebrated writer said of Caesar, that he was so clement as to be compelled to repent it. Let this be, then, if you will, the illustrious fault of Charles as well as of Caesar; but if any one wishes to believe that misfortune and defeat are always associated with weakness, do not let him think, for all that, he can persuade us that either strength was wanting in Charles's courage or energy in his resolutions. When pursued to the very last extremities by Fortune's implacable malignity, and betrayed by all his people, he never deserted his own cause; in spite of the ill success of his unfortunate arms, though conquered he was not subdued; and

just as he never when victorious refused that which was reasonable, when captive he always rejected that which was weak and unjust. I can hardly behold his great heart in his last trials: but certainly he showed that no rebels can deprive of his majesty a king who really knows himself; and those who saw with what visage he appeared in Westminster Hall and in Whitehall Square can easily judge how intrepid he was at the head of his armies, how august and imposing in the middle of his palace and court. Great Queen, I satisfy your tenderest desires when I celebrate this monarch; and this heart, which never lived but for him, wakes up from its dust and resumes sentiment, even under this funeral drapery, at the name of such a beloved husband, whom his enemies themselves will call wise and just, and whom posterity will name among great princes, provided his history finds readers whose judgment does not allow itself to be swayed by events and by fortune.

Those who are informed in regard to the facts, being compelled to admit that the King's conduct had given no reason and not even a pretext for the sacrilegious excesses the memory of which is abhorred by us, ascribe them to the unconquerable haughtiness of the nation; and I own that the hatred of parricides is apt to throw our minds into such an opinion: but when we more closely consider the history of this great kingdom, especially during the last reigns, in which not simply adult kings, but even children under guardianship and queens themselves have wielded a power so absolute, and inspired so much terror; when we see the incredible facility with which the true Religion was by turns upset and restored by Henry, Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, we do not find either the nation so prone to rebel nor its Parliaments so proud and factious. Rather we are compelled to reproach these people with too much docility, since they placed under the yoke even their faith and conscience. Do not let us then make blind accusations against the inhabitants of the most celebrated island in the world, who according to the most reliable histories trace their

origin back to Gaul; and do not let us believe that the Mercians, the Danes, and the Saxons have so far corrupted in them the good blood which they had received from our ancestors as to lead them to such barbarous proceedings, if some other causes had not intervened. What is it, then, that drove them on? What force, what transport, what disturbance of the elements stirred these agitations, these violences? There is no doubt, Christians, that false religions, infidelity, the thirst of disputing on things divine without end, without rule, without submission, carried away their hearts. Those are the enemies against which the Queen had to fight, and which neither her prudence, her leniency, nor her firmness could conquer.

A man appeared, of a mind incredibly deep, a consummate dissembler and at the same time a powerful statesman, capable of undertaking everything and of concealing everything, no less active and indefatigable in peace than in war; who left nothing to fortune of that which he could take from it by wisdom or foresight, but withal so vigilant, so well prepared for everything that he never failed to improve any opportunity: in short, one of those restless and audacious minds which seem to have been born in order to transform the world. How dangerous the fate of such minds, and how many appear in history who were ruined by their very boldness! But at the same time, what do they not achieve when it pleases God to make use of them! To this one it was given to deceive the people and to prevail against the kings. For as he had discovered that in this infinite medley of sects, which no longer had any fixed rules, the pleasure of dogmatic arguing without any fear of being reprimanded or restrained by any authority, either ecclesiastical or secular, was the spell that charmed their minds, he so well managed to conciliate them thereby that out of this monstrous medley he created a formidable unit. When a man has once found a way of seducing the multitude with the bait of freedom, they afterwards blindly follow, provided they still hear the beloved word. These,

occupied with the object that had first transported them, were still going on without noticing that they were going to servitude; and their subtle leader—who while fighting and arguing, while uniting in himself a thousand different characters, while acting as theologian and prophet as well as soldier and captain, saw that he had so bewitched the world that he was looked upon by the whole army as a chief sent by God for the protection of independence—began to perceive that he could drive them still further. I shall not relate to you the story of his too prosperous undertakings nor his famous victories which made virtue indignant, nor his long tranquillity which astonished the world. It was God's purpose to instruct the kings not to desert his Church. He wished to reveal by one great example all that heresy can do, how indocile and independent it naturally is, how fatal to royalty and to any legitimate authority. Moreover, when this great God has chosen any one for the instrument of his designs nothing can stop his course: he either chains or blinds or subdues all that is capable of resistance. "I am the Lord," he says through the lips of Jeremiah; "I am he who made the earth, with the men and animals; and I place it in the hands of whomsoever pleases me; and now I wished to submit these lands to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, my servant." He calls him his servant, although an infidel, because he selected him for enforcing his decrees. "And I order," he goes on, "that everything be obedient unto him, even the animals;" thus it is that everything bends and becomes flexible when God so commands! But listen to the rest of the prophecy:—"I order that these people shall obey him, and shall obey his son also, until the time of the one and the other do come." See, ye Christians, how clearly marked the times are, how numbered the generations: God determines how long the sleep of the world shall be, and also when the awakening is to come.

3. *The "Discourse upon Universal History."* Originally written for the Dauphin,

the *Discourse upon Universal History* begins with the Biblical account of the creation and ends with Charlemagne as Emperor, A. D. 800. The first part discusses the significance of twelve events which in the mind of Bossuet are epoch-making, viz., the creation, the flood, the calling of Abraham, the giving of the Law, the taking of Troy, the building of Solomon's Temple, the foundation of Rome, the reëstablishment of the Hebrew nationality, the defeat of Carthage, the birth of Christ, the triumph of the Church under Constantine and the coronation of Charlemagne. The purpose of the second part, which he calls *Religion,* is to demonstrate that the coming of Christ is foretold in the Old Testament and that the Roman Catholic Church is the sole representative of pure Christianity. The third part, *The Empires,* is a more philosophical and less theological attempt to explain the facts of history by studying the influences which have been brought to bear upon different nations. The following extract, showing public spirit in Rome, is from this work:

He who can put into the minds of the people patience in labor, a feeling for glory and the nation's greatness, and love of their country, can boast of having framed the political constitution best fitted for the production of great men. It is undoubtedly to great men that the strength of an empire is due. Nature never fails to bring forth in all countries lofty minds and hearts; but we must assist it in forming them. What forms and perfects them consists of strong feelings and noble impressions which spread through all minds and invisibly pass from

one to another. What is it that makes our nobility so proud in battle, so bold in its undertakings? It is the opinion received from childhood and established by the unanimous sentiment of the nation, that a nobleman without valor degrades himself and is no longer worthy to see the light of day. All the Romans were nurtured in these sentiments, and the common people vied with the aristocracy as to who would in action be most faithful to these vigorous maxims. . . . The fathers who did not bring their children up in these maxims, and in the manner necessary to enable them to serve the State, were called into court before the magistrates and there adjudged guilty of a crime against the public. When such a course has been entered upon, great men produce great men to succeed them; and if Rome has had such men in greater number than any other city, it is nowise due to chance; it is because the Roman State, constituted in the manner which we have described, possessed as it were the very nature that must needs be most prolific of heroes.

IV. Bourdaloue. Born in 1632 at Bourges, Louis Bourdaloue was of an age with Bossuet, and by the public of his day was considered the greater and more eloquent preacher. At the age of sixteen he entered the Order of Jesuits and early was appointed to a chair in the academy of his native town, where he remained for several years. In 1666 he began preaching with such great success that he was called to Paris, where he very soon achieved a reputation that placed him on a par with the other great men of the age. Seven or eight times he was asked to preach the Lenten sermons at Versailles, while no other preacher received half as many invitations. At the revocation of the Edict of Nantes he was sent

into Languedoc to confirm the new Catholic converts, and he executed the delicate commission with much tactfulness. The later years of his life were spent away from the pulpit, in active service in hospitals, prisons and pious institutions. His death occurred at Paris in 1704, and his last words show how completely devoted he was to his faith: "It is highly reasonable that God be fully satisfied; and at least in purgatory I will suffer with patience and with love."

For thirty-four years Bourdaloue preached a plain and wholesome Christianity, never varying in the perfection of its quality, never losing sight of its purpose. His grave and simple discourse was not eloquent in the way that was Bossuet's, but it went straight to the heart and was reinforced by the modesty and rectitude of his life. His aim was not to startle, not to make a display, but to speak from his own soul to that of his hearer, and to convince. As Vinet says of him, "He preached, confessed, consoled, and then he died."

V. Massillon. Jean Baptiste Massillon, the celebrated Bishop of Clermont, was born in 1663, and was teaching theology in the diocese of Meaux when an eloquent funeral oration by him attracted so much attention that he was called to Paris and placed at the head of the Seminary of Saint Magliore, where his kindness, gentleness and amiability combined with his eloquence to increase his popularity and confirm his reputation. His greatest tri-

umphs, perhaps, were achieved in his funeral orations, for successively he delivered them in honor of the Prince of Conti, the Dauphin and Louis XIV. He was appointed to preach before the young King Louis XV, and for the occasion prepared his celebrated *Petit Careme (Little Lenten Sermons),* a series of ten, delivered in 1718. Elected a member of the French Academy and appointed Bishop of Clermont the following year, it was not until four years later that he made his last public discourse in Paris, when he pronounced the funeral oration of the Duchess of Orleans. Then he devoted himself to his diocese, and died at Clermont, in his eightieth year.

Coming a little later than Bossuet and Bourdaloue, who had carried pulpit eloquence to greater heights than it had ever reached before, Massillon, showing more subtlety, more refinement, a deeper insight into the human heart, a more catholic understanding and a power, greater than either of his predecessors, of stirring emotion in his hearers, became the greatest preacher of that age, which Voltaire described as the greatest in pulpit oratory of all time. Massillon's oratory was indeed capable of rousing the feelings; it is said that his method was rather to terrify sinners than to lead his hearers gently along by tender, appealing sentiments. One authority says he spoke only of crime and punishment and would, in another age, have discouraged his flock.

The *Grand Careme*, a collection of forty-two, delivered at Versailles before Louis XIV during the Lenten season of 1704, Voltaire said he kept by his side all the time with the *Athalie* of Racine. When Bourdaloue was asked what he thought of the new preacher, he answered in words from Holy Writ: "He must increase, but I must decrease." It was at the close of the delivery of the *Grand Careme* that Louis XIV paid him an elegant compliment in saying: "Father, I have heard several great orators in my chapel; I have been mightily pleased with them: as for you, every time I have heard you, I have been very much displeased—with myself."

About to deliver the sermon at the final obsequies of Louis XIV, he entered with downcast eyes, as was his custom, but at length he raised them suddenly, and looking swiftly and silently over the magnificent spectacle, fixed them upon the lofty catafalque while he repeated his text from *Ecclesiastes:* "I have become great: I have surpassed in glory all who have preceded me in Jerusalem." After a long dramatic pause he continued, "My brethren, God alone is great."

His delivery was dramatic, but usually without gestures. He understood the value of a pause, and used it effectively. A remarkable passage in his sermon, *The Small Number of the Saved,* is often quoted:

> If Jesus should appear in this temple, in the midst of this assembly, the most august in the whole world, to

be our judge, to make the terrible separation between the sheep and the goats, do you believe that the greater number of us would be set on his right hand?—do you believe that things would be at least equal?—do you believe there would be found here only ten righteous, which the Lord was not able to find formerly in five entire cities? I ask you;—you do not know, I do not know myself. Thou alone, O God, dost know those who belong to thee! But if we do not know who belong to him, we do know at least that sinners do not. But who are the faithful believers here assembled?—Titles and dignities must be counted for nothing; you will be stripped of them before Jesus. Who are they? A mass of sinners who do not wish to be converted; still more who wish to be, but who are putting off their conversion: a good many who were converted, but only always to backslide; finally, a great number who think they have no need of conversion: here is the party of the reprobates. Retrench these four sorts of sinners from this holy assembly; for they will be retrenched in the great day;—appear now, ye righteous: where are you? Remnant of Israel, pass to the right; wheat of Jesus, separate yourselves from this chaff destined to the fire. O God! where are thine elect? and what remains for thy portion?

It is said that the sermon from which the above is taken was delivered first in one of the churches of Paris, and when he reached the climax, "Remnant of Israel, pass to the right," the whole congregation rose as one man and obeyed his injunction, scarcely knowing what they were doing. Moreover, when the same discourse was delivered at Versailles, although the court had heard of its effect and were anticipating the passage, the effect was no less overpowering.

With one more extract from his writings we must close this all too short and unconvincing sketch. It is taken from the first sermon before Louis XIV on the text, "Blessed are they that mourn." Defending himself from the possible accusation that the worldliness against which he preaches is a delusion, he says:

The world?—It is an everlasting servitude, where no one lives for himself, and where to be blest one must be able to kiss one's fetters and love one's slavery. The world?—It is a daily round of events which awaken in succession, in the hearts of its partisans, the most violent and the most gloomy passions, cruel hatreds, hateful perplexities, bitter fears, devouring jealousies, overwhelming griefs. The world?—It is a territory under a curse, where even its pleasures carry with them their thorns and their bitternesses; its sport tires by its furies and its caprices; its conversations annoy by the oppositions of its moods and the contrariety of its sentiments; its passions and criminal attachments have their disgusts, their derangements, their unpleasant brawls; its shows, hardly finding more in the spectators than souls grossly dissolute, and incapable of being awakened but by the most monstrous excesses of debauchery, become stale, while moving only those delicate passions which only show crime in the distance, and dress out traps for innocence. The world, in fine, is a place where hope, regarded as a passion so sweet, renders everybody unhappy; where those who have nothing to hope for, think themselves still more miserable; where all that pleases, pleases never for long; and where *ennui* is almost the sweetest destiny and the most supportable that one can expect in it.

This, my brethren, is the world: and it is not the obscure world, which knows neither the great pleasures nor the charms of prosperity, of favor, and of wealth,—it is the world at its best; it is the world of the court; it is you yourselves who hear me, my brethren.

VI. Fenelon. Lamartine's suggestion of an epitaph for François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon may well stand at the head of this brief sketch: "There are men who have made France more feared or more renowned, but none have made her more beloved by other nations." He was born of a noble military family in Perigord in 1651, when his father was quite old and his mother a young second wife. For twelve years the boy was carefully nurtured in his home and educated in the atmosphere of Athens in the age of Pericles. He finished his scholastic career at the University of Cahors. Although destined for the priesthood, young Fenelon was taken to Paris by his uncle, who soon became alarmed at the popularity of his gifted and attractive nephew and transferred him to the Seminary of St. Sulpice, where he was to enter on his novitiate. Disappointed by the influence of his two uncles in his early ambition to lead the life of a missionary in Canada, he entered into his studies with enthusiasm and soon became a priest in Paris, where for three years on Sundays he taught the children of the poor. Once again it is known, from a letter to his friend Bossuet, he contemplated a missionary life, but again his uncle, while seeming to consent, turned by indirection the thoughts of the young man into another channel.

At twenty-seven he was nominated director of the new converts to Catholicism, whose numbers had rapidly increased under the harsh

measures of the King, and the young ecclesiastic discharged the duties of his difficult position with consummate skill.

His friendship for Bossuet brought him into discredit with one of his superiors, and he failed of advancement, so the only income he possessed until he was forty-two was about seven hundred fifty dollars a year, produced by a small living presented to him by his uncle.

During this period he wrote for the Duchess of Beauvilliers the *Traite de l'Education des Filles* (*Treatise on the Education of Girls*) (1687), a work accepted by Voltaire as superior in many ways to Rosseau's *Emile,* in that it presents no dream of Utopia but a practical and reasonable mode of education adapted to the age. Much of his time during this quiet period he passed in semi-retirement with his choice friends, the Abbe Fleury, the Abbe Langeron and other churchmen, all under the advice and tutelage of Bossuet, whose association enriched their minds and exalted their spirits.

Bossuet, then at the height of his career, seeking for some one to quell the fear excited in the provinces by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and other repressive measures, selected Fenelon as his representative, and the young ecclesiastic was sent to Poitou to reassure the frightened people. That his sympathies were with them the people soon found out, and in him they had a warm advocate before Bossuet and the King. Upon his return

from Poitou he found greater honors awaiting him. Mme. de Maintenon and the Duke of Beauvilliers, governor to the youthful grandson of the King, recommended Fenelon as a suitable tutor for this scion of royalty, the Duke of Burgundy. The King accepted him as the proper man to instill his own royal spirit into that of the child, and Fenelon, perforce, accepted the position he had not sought. Bossuet was pleased at the "public exaltation of a merit which sought so carefully to conceal itself;" the Abbe Tronson, Fenelon's spiritual director, wrote:

> The portals of earthly grandeur are opened to you, but beware lest they shut out the more solid greatness of heaven. Your friends, doubtless, felicitate you with the assurance of this post having been bestowed unsought, and this is truly a source of consolation; but do not plume yourself too highly upon it, we have often more to do with our own elevation than we like to believe. Unknown to ourselves we assist in removing obstacles. We do not absolutely court those who can serve us, but we willingly display ourselves to them in the most favorable point of view. It is to these natural revealings, in which we suffer our merit to appear, that may be attributed the commencement of promotion. Thus no man can say he has not contributed to elevate himself.

One of his first acts was to appoint the Abbe Fleury, the Abbe Langeron and the Abbe Beaumont (his nephew) to places about the young Prince, so that all the tutor's affections and interests might be concentrated in his work and his spirit multiplied about his charge. Of this youth, St. Simon writes:

In his earliest years he caused those about him to tremble; unfeeling, displaying the most violent passion, which extended towards inanimate objects, incapable of bearing the slightest contradiction, even from the hours or the elements, without giving way to a whirlwind of rage sufficient to break all the blood-vessels in his body—I speak of what I have often witnessed: opinionated to excess; absorbed in the pursuits of pleasure, fond of good living, following the chase with furious impetuosity, enjoying music with a sort of delirium, madly attached to play, but unable to bear loss, and when defeated, becoming positively dangerous; in fact, abandoned to all the evil passions, and transported by every corrupting pleasure; often savage, naturally cruel; bitter in raillery, ridiculing with a remorseless power, regarding all men (irrespective of merit), from his high position, but as atoms with whom he could have no affinity. Wit and powers of penetration shone through all he did or said, even in his paroxysms of extreme violence. His repartees were marvelous, his replies always just and profound. He but glanced superficially at the most abstruse points of learning; the extent and vivacity of his powers were so varied that they prevented his fixing upon any distinct branch of knowledge, and almost rendered him incapable of study. From this abyss came forth a prince.

Lamartine's description of Fenelon, when in his forty-second year he appeared at court, possesses great interest. Somewhat abridged, it is as follows:

His figure was tall, elegant, and flexible in its proportions as that of Cicero. Nobility and modesty reigned in his air and governed his motions; the delicacy and paleness of his features added to their perfection. He borrowed none of his beauty from the carnation, owed none of it to color; it consisted entirely in the purity and grace of outline, and was altogether of a moral and intellectual cast. We feel while contemplating this countenance, that

the rare and delicate elements of which it was composed, afforded no home to the more brutal and sensual passions. They were shaped and molded only to display a quick intelligence, and to render the soul visible. His forehead was lofty, oval, rounded in the center, depressed and throbbing towards the temples; surmounted by fine hair of an undecided color, which the involuntary breath of inspiration agitated like a gentle wind, as it curled around the cap that covered the top of his head. His eyes, of a liquid transparency, received, like water, the various reflections of light and shadow, thought and impression. It was said that their color reflected the texture of his mind. Eyebrows arched, round, and delicate, relieved them; long, veined, and transparent lids covered and unveiled them alternately with a rapid movement. His aquiline nose was marked by a slight prominence, which gave energy of expression to a profile more Greek than Roman. His mouth, the lips of which were partly unclosed, like those of a man who breathes from an open heart, had an expression, wavering between melancholy and playfulness, which revealed the freedom of a spirit controlled by the gravity of the thoughts. Eloquence or familiar conversation flowed spontaneously from every fold; the cheeks were depressed, but unwrinkled, save at the two corners of the mouth, where benevolence had indented lines expressive of habitual graciousness. His chin, firm and somewhat prominent, gave a manly solidity to a countenance otherwise approaching the feminine. His voice corresponded, in its sweet, grave, and winning resonance, with all the harmonious traits of his countenance. The tone conveyed as much as the words, and moved the listeners before the meaning was conveyed to them.

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To these endowments of nature, Fenelon added all those which are bestowed by a natural power of pleasing, without an effort to beguile or flatter. The desire of being loved as he himself loved, was his sole art of flattery and seduction; but in this also lay all his power.

This ardent inclination to please was no effort of his mind, it was simply his good fortune. Drawn towards all by his love, he drew all in turn to himself. Benevolence was so completely his essence, that in breathing he imparted it to others. The universal regard which he met with, was but the rebound of that affection he displayed towards his fellow-creatures. This desire to please was no artifice; it was a spontaneous emotion. He did not, like the ambitious, exert it only where interest beckoned, towards those who by their friendship could aid his advancement or his schemes; it extended to all, without other distinction than deference to the great and condescension to the humble.

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A faultless tact (that instinct of the mind) involuntarily prevented his evincing too much consideration for one person, or too little for another. The measure bestowed on each was correctly proportioned. To all other charms, he joined a marvelous grace,—a grace the gift of nature, and to which good taste was added by gentle birth. . . . His politeness never seemed an attention to all, but a peculiar notice bestowed on each; it imparted its own character to his genius. He never sought to dazzle by display those who might have felt obscured or humiliated under the ascendancy of his talents. . . . His conversation left that impression on the soul which his voice left on the ear, and his features on the eyes,—a new, powerful, and indelible stamp, which could never be effaced, either from the mind, the senses, or the heart. Some men have been greater; none have been more adapted to humanity; and none have swayed more by the power of the affections.

For his pupil Fenelon wrote his graceful prose *Fables,* his *Dialogues des Morts,* intended to show the application of moral principles to politics, and, more important than either, his *Telemaque,* a popular book that has been wide-

ly read in many countries. His influence upon his pupil was profound, the friendship between them persisted through all vicissitudes, and had the Duke survived Louis XIV, it is probable that the gentle Archbishop might have ruled France through the truly good man he had created. A historian not accustomed to flatter writes of the Prince in the strongest terms of approval, and alluding to his early death says: "France at last sinks under this heavy chastisement. God showed her a prince she did not deserve: the earth was unworthy of him!"

To return to Fenelon: While exercising his duties as preceptor for the Duke, the devoted teacher became more and more the friend of Mme. de Maintenon, then the secret wife of Louis and the most powerful person in France, and increased his influence in the royal family. But he was a liberal-minded man in an age of conservatism, a believer in justice and the rights of the people, a great man far in advance of his age, and holding ideas that must eventually conflict with the stern monarchical notions of the *Grand Monarque*. That Fenelon knew his position was evidenced by the secrecy with which some of his ideas were inculcated in the mind of the Prince and the withholding from publication of some of his minor works and *Telemachus*.

Under the auspices of Mme. de Maintenon, Fenelon was introduced to Mme. Guyon, a widow with five children, who since the death

of her husband had considerable notoriety as the companion and disciple of Pere Lecomb, in his mystic species of *Quietism* that taught perfection here on earth might be reached by contemplation and by complete and quiet submission of the will to the love of God, good works occupying but a small part of the Christian's life. Carried to extremes, the doctrines became unwholesome and met with the condemnation of the Church. Fenelon's sympathetic and enthusiastic nature was drawn by that of Mme. Guyon, and, while he may not have adopted her views, he was convinced of her purity and sincerity. In the bitter attacks that followed, Pere Lecomb was driven into exile, while Mme. Guyon was imprisoned and freed, only to be imprisoned again. Politics became involved in the controversey, Fenelon was dragged into it, and finally, Bossuet, having exhausted his patience in trying to stop his friend from his defense of the woman's character, attacked Fenelon with great bitterness. The latter replied sadly and gently, but refused to admit that Mme. Guyon as a woman was unworthy. The King, the Archbishop of Paris, Mme. de Maintenon, and others were all embroiled, and a decision was asked of the Pope, who, after much delay and apparent hesitation, rebuked Fenelon in the manner indicated in our sketch of Bossuet in an earlier part of this chapter.

Prior to the conclusion of the controversy, Fenelon had been appointed Archbishop of

Cambrai, and before his congregation he acknowledged his error in all humility, for he firmly believed in the authority of the Pope in matters spiritual. It seemed now that Fenelon might again return to his pupil and resume his influence at court, but a treacherous copyist gave to some printers in Holland a copy of *Telemachus,* and when Louis XIV learned of its alarming opinions he renewed his anger, and Fenelon was forever disgraced.

At a later date, the death of the Dauphin brought Fenelon's pupil within a step of the throne, and once again hope of restoration to influence burned within him, courtiers began to approach him with solicitude, and the nation looked to see him guide the destinies of France upon the death of Louis XIV. But the light was short-lived, for the untimely death of the Duke brought back the clouds of popular disapproval.

Undaunted, Fenelon took up his charitable labors, and during the disastrous days that marked the close of the reign of Louis gave his time and his means to support the poor and destitute whom war had thrust upon him. On New Year's day, 1715, he was seized by a fever, which his distress of mind augmented, and six days later he expired, with a resigned spirit, amidst the prayers and ministrations of devoted friends.

Lamartine says:

> It was the nature of Fenelon to love; it was his glory to be beloved. Of all the great men of this grand age

of Louis the Fourteenth, not one has left the recollection of so gentle a ministry. There is a tenderness in the accent of all when speaking of him, which describes the individual man. His poetry enchants our infancy, his religion breathes the gentleness of the lamb, the emblem of Christ; even his political doctrines show only the errors and illusions of mistaken love; and his whole life is the poetic history of a good man struggling with the impossibilities of the times.

VII. "TELEMACHUS." Fenelon, preacher, rhetorician, moralist and politician, essayed every department of literature with success; but in *Telemachus,* his masterpiece and the production by which he is now best remembered, are combined the expression of every phase of his many-sided mind.

Composed as a manual for his royal pupil, it was written with great care, in clear and perfect style; a poem in prose, an education in romance. Pagan in its form, it is nevertheless Christian in its teachings. Unfortunately, as it is in prose and lacks the melody of verse, it is not the great epic it might have been, and yet the prose is rhythmical, and in the use of figures and in spirit the tale is poetical. Its philosophy and political economy are visionary and impractical, but its ideas, if carried out, would have bettered immeasurably conditions at the epoch in which it was written. All important modern languages have it in translation, and readers of every nationality have admired it. Dr. Channing in a review of the book has said:

Fenelon saw far into the human heart, and especially into the lurkings of self-love. He looked with a piercing

eye through the disguises of sin; but he knew sin, not as most men do, by bitter experience of its power, so much as by his knowledge and experience of virtue. Deformity was revealed to him by his refined perceptions and intense love of moral beauty. The light which he carried with him into the dark corners of the human heart, and by which he laid open its most hidden guilt, was that of celestial goodness. Hence, though the severest of censors, he is the most pitying. Not a tone of asperity escapes him. He looks on human error with an angel's tenderness, with tears which an angel might shed, and thus reconciles and binds us to our race, at the very moment of revealing its corruptions.

Telemachus relates the wanderings of Telemachus in his search for his father, Ulysses, during which he has the guidance and advice of the goddess Minerva, under the guise of the old and faithful Mentor. The best part of it is included in the first six books, which recite his adventures up to the time he left the island of Calypso. An epitome of this section is as follows:

After having suffered shipwreck, Telemachus lands upon the island of Calypso, who is still sorrowing over the departure of Ulysses. She receives the young man good-naturedly, then falls in love with him, offers him immortality and begs him to tell the story of his adventures. He begins by telling of shipwreck, the danger of being sacrificed to the manes of Anchises, the assistance which Mentor furnished Acestes against an invasion of the barbarians, and the King's gratitude in furnishing them with a Tyrian vessel in order that they

might return home. Continuing, he relates his capture by the fleet of Sesostris, King of Egypt, by whom he was carried into that country, whose beauty, together with the counsels of Mentor, he describes as follows:

If the sorrows of captivity had not rendered us insensible to pleasure, we must have been delighted with the prospect of this fertile country, which had the appearance of a vast garden, watered with an infinite number of canals. Each side of the river was diversified with opulent cities, delightful villas, fields that produce every year a golden harvest, and meadows that were covered with flocks: earth lavished her fruits upon the husbandman, till he stooped under the burden; and Echo seemed pleased to repeat the rustic music of the shepherds.

"Happy are the people," said Mentor, "who are governed by so wise a King! They flourish in perpetual plenty, and love him by whom that plenty is bestowed. Thus, O Telemachus, ought thy government to secure the happiness of thy people, if the gods shall at length exalt thee to the throne of thy father. Love thy subjects as thy children; and learn, from their love of thee, to derive the happiness of a parent: teach them to connect the idea of happiness with that of their King, that, whenever they rejoice in the blessings of peace, they may remember their benefactor, and honor thee with the tribute of gratitude. The kings who are only solicitous to be feared, and teach their subjects humility by oppression, are the scourges of mankind. They are, indeed, objects of terror; but they are also objects of hatred and detestation, and have more to fear from their subjects than their subjects can have to fear from them."

Separated from Telemachus by a decree of the King, Mentor had been sent to Ethiopia as a slave, while Telemachus had been made a

shepherd in an oasis. In this condition a priest of Apollo taught him to imitate that god, who had once been the shepherd of Admetus. Sesostris, astonished at what he had heard concerning the influence and example of Telemachus among the shepherds, at length determined to interview him, and, having heard his story, promised to send him back to Ithaca. The death of Sesostris, however, brought new woes to the wanderer, who was shut up in a tower overlooking the sea, from which he saw the new King slain in a battle in which his rebellious subjects were aided by Tyrians. The second new King, having released all the Tyrian prisoners, sent Telemachus with Narbal, who had commanded the Tyrian fleet, to his capital. On the way, Narbal, describing his King, said that he felt there was danger from his avarice, and afterwards gave an account of the commercial regulations of Tyre. In leaving Tyre for the island of Cyprus, Pygmalion happened to disclose the fact that Telemachus was a stranger, and he was seized and might have lost his life, but the King's mistress preserved him that she might procure the death of a young Lyctian, whom she loved, but who had rejected her advances, and Telemachus finally embarked for Cyprus.

At this point Calypso interrupts Telemachus, who retires for the night. Mentor reproves him for having begun the tale of his adventures, but advises him to continue, now that he has commenced. And so the story goes on.

Telemachus relates a dream in which he thought Minerva protected him from Venus and Cupid and that afterwards he saw Mentor, who exhorted him to fly from the island of Cyprus, and when suddenly he awakened he found the vessel in the midst of a great storm which would have been followed by shipwreck had not Telemachus himself taken the helm, for all the Cyprians were intoxicated. When he arrived at the island of Cyprus, he was struck with horror at the debauchery he saw, but was delighted to find that Hazael, the master of Mentor, had brought his slave to Cyprus, and the two friends, joined again, went aboard Hazael's ship, bound to Crete. During the voyage he saw Amphitrite in her chariot drawn by sea-horses:

We perceived several dolphins approaching, whose scales were varied with azure and gold. Their sport swelled the sea into waves, and covered it with foam. These were followed by tritons, who with their spiral shells emulated the music of the trumpet. In the midst of them appeared the chariot of Amphitrite, drawn by sea-horses whiter than snow, which, dividing the waves as they passed, left behind them long furrows in the deep. Fire sparkled in their eyes, and from their nostrils issued clouds of smoke. The chariot of the goddess was a shell, whiter and brighter than ivory, of a wonderful figure: and it was mounted upon wheels of gold. It seemed almost to fly over the level surface of the water. A great number of young nymphs swam in a crowd after the chariot; their hair, which was decorated with flowers, flowed loosely behind them, and wantoned in the breeze. The goddess held in one hand a scepter of gold, with which she awed the waves to obedience; and, with the

other, she held the little god Palemon, her son, whom she suckled upon her lap. Such sweetness and majesty were expressed in her countenance, that the rebellious winds dispersed at her appearance, and gloomy tempests howled only at a distance. Tritons guided the horses with golden reins. A large purple sail waved above, which was but half distended by a multitude of little Zephyrs, who labored to swell it with their breath. In the mid air appeared Aeolus, busy, restless, and vehement. His wrinkled and morose countenance, his threatening voice, his shaggy brows, which hung down to his beard, and the sullen austerity that gleamed in his eyes, awed the hurricanes of the north to silence, and drove back the clouds. Whales of an enormous size, and all the monsters of the deep, that caused the sea to ebb and flow with their nostrils, rushed from their secret recesses, to gaze upon the goddess.

Mentor, having previously visited Crete, had discoursed to Telemachus as follows:

"This island," said he, "which is admired by all foreigners, and famous for its hundred cities, produces all the necessaries of life in great plenty for its inhabitants, although they are almost innumerable; for the earth is always profusely bountiful to those who cultivate it, and its treasures are inexhaustible. The greater the number of inhabitants in any country, the greater plenty they enjoy, if they are not idle; nor have they any cause to be jealous of each other. The earth, like a good mother, multiplies her gifts in proportion to the number of her children, who merit her bounty by their labor. The ambition and the avarice of mankind are the only source of their calamities; every individual wishes to possess the portion of all, and becomes wretched by the desire of superfluities. If men would be content with the simplicity of nature, and wish only to satisfy their real necessities, plenty, cheerfulness, domestic concord, and public tranquillity would be uninterrupted and universal.

"A deep knowledge of these important truths was the glory of Minos, the wisest of legislators and the best of kings. All the wonders of this island are the effects of his laws. The education which he prescribed for children renders the body healthy and robust, and forms an early habit of frugality and labor. That every species and degree of voluptuousness will debilitate both the body and the mind, is an established maxim; and no pleasure is proposed as the object of desire, but that of becoming invincible by heroic virtue and distinguished by superior glory. Courage is not considered as the contempt of death only in the field of battle, but also as the contempt of superfluous wealth and shameful pleasure. And three vices are punished in Crete, which in every other country are suffered with impunity—ingratitude, dissimulation, and avarice.

"It might, perhaps, be expected that there should be some law against luxury and pomp; but at Crete luxury and pomp are not known. Every man labors, and no man thinks of becoming rich: labor is thought to be sufficiently recompensed by a life of quiet and regularity, in which all that the wants of nature have made necessary is enjoyed in plenty and in peace. No splendid palace, no costly furniture, no magnificent apparel, no voluptuous festivity, is permitted. The clothing of the inhabitants is, indeed, made of the finest wool, and dyed of the most beautiful color, but is perfectly plain, and without embroidery. Their meals, at which they drink little wine, are extremely temperate, consisting chiefly of bread, such fruits as the season produces, and milk. If they ever taste animal food, it is in a small quantity, plainly dressed, and of the coarsest kind; for they always reserve the finest cattle for labor, that agriculture may flourish. The houses are neat, convenient, and pleasant, but without ornament. Architecture is, indeed, well known among them, in its utmost elegance and magnificence, but the practice of this art is reserved for the temples of the gods, and it is thought presumptuous in a mortal to have a dwelling like theirs. The wealth of

the Cretans consists in health, vigor, courage, domestic quiet and concord, public liberty, plenty of all that is necessary, contempt of all that is superfluous, habits of industry, abhorrence of idleness, emulation in virtue, submission to the laws, and reverence of the gods."

Telemachus also learned that Idomeneus, King of Crete, had sacrificed his son in order to keep a rash vow, and the inhabitants were so outraged by the act that they had driven him out of the country and were now met to elect a new sovereign. Telemachus was admitted to the assembly, answered all the questions recorded by Minos in his laws, and, having obtained the prizes in various exercises, was elected King, an honor which he refused in order to return to Ithaca. He, however, proposed Mentor as an even more satisfactory king, but the latter likewise refused. Then, when they asked him to recommend a subject and Mentor named Aristodemus, they immediately proclaimed the latter King. The enmity of Venus followed them, and after they had embarked for Italy Neptune was induced to shipwreck them, after which they landed on the island of Calypso, where the goddess had received them with great kindness and generous hospitality. To readers of Homer and Vergil the framework of the tale will appear to follow closely that of the *Odyssey* and of the *Aeneid.*

The remainder of the eighteen or twenty-four books into which, according to the edition, the tale is divided, contain a similar account

of the adventures of Telemachus up to the time that he meets his father in the shepherd's cottage, as related in the *Odyssey*. From the account given and the brief quotations made, an idea can be obtained of the way in which Fenelon instructed his royal pupil through the discourses of Mentor on the various countries which Telemachus visited and the wholesome advice given to his young friend on every subject suggested by what he observed.

JOAN OF ARC

CHAPTER XVII

TRANSITION

THE DAWN OF SKEPTICISM. The age of Louis XIV was one of belief and intolerance, yet under the restraining influences of religion, the classics and the absolutism of the *Grand Monarque,* a literature had been created that was recognized throughout Europe as fixing the rules of taste and elegance. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, religious belief gave way to a skeptical philosophy, political reform became an ungovernable passion, and classical literature gave way to modern form and content. At the beginning, the objections to the old order of things were timid and hesitating merely, for when the death of Louis XIV removed his protecting influence and the noted men of genius who had been sheltered by his all-powerful wing disappeared, they left no creditable successors. The new

race of writers felt none of that subserviency which had characterized their predecessors, for there was nothing in the government to inspire it. Consequently, they became gradually more indifferent to the powers that prevailed, learned to look upon authority with question, and finally to ridicule it. In fact, cynicism and contempt for established conditions had begun to make its appearance before Louis XIV closed his tired eyes on the scene, and the unfortunate political moves of the latter years of his reign merely served to increase this tendency.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes drove many brainy men out of France, and from among these refugees came several who wrote openly against the intolerance of the King; these, questioning the authority and practices of the Church, instigated others to inquire more closely into religious matters and to develop the spirit of skepticism, which became the most pronounced feature of the eighteenth century. The questioning spirit grew, and under such leaders as Bayle the habit spread until every subject was open to criticism, and the cynical spirit attacked the most revered and apparently stable institutions.

II. Political Disillusionment. Jean de la Bruyere, of whose early life little is known, obtained through the influence of Bossuet a position as tutor to the grandson of the great Condé. He was a keen-eyed observer, who was already disenchanted with the spectacle before him

and took pleasure in recording as an appendix of a translation from Theophrastus his only work of importance, *The Characters and Manners of the Age.* It contains sixteen chapters of independent paragraphs, in which he presented his studies in the form of maxims, reflections, brief observations and portraits of important personages. His chief merit lies not in the beauty and elegance of his language, nor in the judgment he shows, but in the fact that he was a naturalist, that is, one who observed and recorded what he saw with care and precision. The variety of the work commends it to the reader, and in the criticisms there is none of that unsparing bitterness which characterized later writers. "I restore to the public what the public lent me," he says in an introductory sentence. "Among all the different modes in which a single thought may be expressed, only one is correct," he says in another place; and Voltaire, an admirer of the moralist and virtuoso, says of his style that it is rapid, concise, nervous and picturesque.

The effect of his writings was to make his readers examine in a critical frame of mind public institutions and the ruling classes. The reading of Bruyere was for many the beginning of political and social disillusionment. But just what the upper classes were like and the manner in which they ruled was better told by Saint-Simon, a member of the aristocracy.

III. Saint-Simon. In 1829 there appeared a remarkable publication, in twenty-one vol-

umes, of the *Memoirs* of Louis de Rouvroy, Duke of Saint-Simon. It appears that for thirty years he had made a practice of writing in an extremely interesting way about the court of Versailles, and that during the last years of his life, in retirement, had edited and perfected them. It is needless to say that he preserved the greatest secrecy and that for years after his death the *Memoirs* were not given to the public. With unsparing hand the humorous, cynical old man set down the facts that he had learned, described the characters of the men and women whom he knew, and exposed all the rottenness which underlay the magnificence of aristocratic society in his time. He had keen eyes, and his position in the court was such that he had unlimited opportunities for observation. There is probably nothing in existence that is more telling than this gossipy account of bygone times.

The Duke of Saint-Simon, a peer of France, was born in Paris in 1675. He was a studious boy, but entered the Grey Musketeers and fought with his company in several great battles. During the latter years of the reign of Louis XIV and in the days of the regency which followed his death, Saint-Simon held important positions at court, but finally fell into disfavor and in 1723 was requested to retire to his estates, where he remained most of the time until his death, twenty-two years later.

One of his most intimate friends was the Abbe de La Trappe, to whom he regularly con-

fessed his sins, without, however, showing any disposition to reform, but rather to return to his gay life with renewed zest. In 1695 he married a beautiful woman, who was provided for him by his parents, but, as is unusual in such cases, the marriage proved to be a very happy one. Such was the life of this curious individual, who began at the age of nineteen to write his *Memoirs* and persisted diligently in it for nearly thirty years. It is evident that from so voluminous a source we can make only a few fragmentary sketches and those merely for the purpose of showing something of the style and nature of those astounding documents, which fill eleven great leather portfolios, each fourteen inches long by nine and one-half wide, bearing the Saint-Simon coat of arms on the outside.

The means by which he secured a portrait of the Abbe de La Trappe throws some light upon his own character as well as upon that of his friend:

My plan being fully arranged, I and Rigault set out. As soon as we arrived at our journey's end, I sought M. de La Trappe, and begged to be allowed to introduce to him a friend of mine,—an officer, who much wished to see him. I added that my friend was a stammerer, and that therefore he would be importuned merely with looks and not words. M. de La Trappe smiled with goodness, thought the officer curious about little, and consented to see him. The interview took place. Rigault, excusing himself on the ground of his infirmity, did little during three-quarters of an hour but keep his eyes upon M. de La Trappe; and at the end went into a room where ma-

terials were already provided for him, and covered his canvas with the images and the ideas he had filled himself with. On the morrow the same thing was repeated; although M. de La Trappe, thinking that a man whom he knew not, and who could take no part in conversation, had sufficiently seen him, agreed to the interview only out of complaisance to me. Another sitting was needed in order to finish the work; but it was with great difficulty M. de La Trappe could be persuaded to consent to it. When the third and last interview was at an end, M. de La Trappe testified to me his surprise at having been so much and so long looked at by a species of mute. I made the best excuse I could, and hastened to turn the conversation.

The portrait was at length finished, and was a most perfect likeness of my venerable friend. Rigault admitted to me that he had worked so hard to produce it from memory that for several months afterwards he had been unable to do anything to his other portraits. Notwithstanding the thousand crowns I had paid him, he broke the engagement he had made by showing the portrait before giving it up to me. Then, solicited for copies, he made several, gaining thereby, according to his own admission, more than twenty-five thousand francs: and thus gave publicity to the affair.

I was very much annoyed at this, and with the noise it made in the world; and I wrote to M. de La Trappe, relating the deception I had practiced upon him, and sued for pardon. He was pained to excess, hurt and afflicted; nevertheless, he showed no anger. He wrote in return to me, and said I was not ignorant that a Roman emperor had said, "I love treason but not traitors;" but that as for himself, he felt, on the contrary, that he loved the traitor but could only hate his treason.

The frankness with which he treated everybody regardless of position at the court and the danger which lay in keeping such a diary may be judged from the following extract,

which shows the infatuation of Louis XIV for Madame de Maintenon. He had at this time arranged for her delectation a mock siege of Compiegne in due form, as though it were a verity. The manner in which he observed the spectacle and the effect produced upon the court is dramatically pictured:

But a spectacle of another sort—that I could paint forty years hence as well as to-day, so strongly did it strike me—was that which from the summit of this rampart the King gave to all his army, and to the innumerable crowd of spectators of all kinds in the plain below. Madame de Maintenon faced the plain and the troops in her sedan chair, alone, between its three windows drawn up; her porters having retired to a distance. On the left pole in front sat Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne; and on the same side, in a semicircle, standing, were Madame la Duchesse, Madame la Princesse de Conti, and all the ladies,—and behind them again, many men. At the right window was the King, standing, and a little in the rear a semicircle of the most distinguished men of the court. The King was nearly always uncovered; and every now and then stooped to speak to Madame de Maintenon, and explain to her what she saw, and the reason of each movement. Each time that he did so she was obliging enough to open the window four or five inches, but never halfway; for I noticed particularly, and I admit that I was more attentive to this spectacle than to that of the troops. Sometimes she opened of her own accord to ask some question of him: but generally it was he who without waiting for her, stooped down to instruct her of what was passing; and sometimes, if she did not notice him, he tapped at the glass to make her open it. He never spoke save to her, except when he gave a few brief orders, or just answered Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne, who wanted to make him speak, and with whom Madame de Maintenon carried on a con-

versation by signs, without opening the front window, through which the young princess screamed to her from time to time. I watched the countenance of every one carefully: all expressed surprise, tempered with prudence, and shame that was, as it were, ashamed of itself; every one behind the chair and in the semicircle watched this scene more than what was going on in the army. The King often put his hat on the top of the chair in order to get his head in to speak; and this continual exercise tired his loins very much. Monseigneur was on horseback in the plain with the young princes. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon, and the weather was as brilliant as could be desired.

Opposite the sedan chair was an opening with some steps cut through the wall, and communicating with the plain below. It had been made for the purpose of fetching orders from the King, should they be necessary. The case happened. Crenan, who commanded, sent Conillac, an officer in one of the defending regiments, to ask for some instructions from the King. Conillac had been stationed at the foot of the rampart, where what was passing above could not be seen. He mounted the steps; and as soon as his head and shoulders were at the top, caught sight of the chair, the King, and all the assembled company. He was not prepared for such a scene; and it struck him with such astonishment that he stopped short, with mouth and eyes wide open,—surprise painted upon every feature. I see him now as distinctly as I did then. The King, as well as the rest of the company, remarked the agitation of Conillac, and said to him with emotion, "Well, Conillac! come up." Conillac remained motionless, and the King continued, "Come up. What is the matter?" Conillac, thus addressed, finished his ascent, and came towards the King with slow and trembling steps, rolling his eyes from right to left like one deranged. Then he stammered something, but in a tone so low that it could not be heard. "What do you say?" cried the King. "Speak up." But Conillac was unable; and the King, finding he could get nothing out of

him, told him to go away. He did not need to be told twice, but disappeared at once. As soon as he was gone, the King looking round said, "I don't know what is the matter with Conillac. He has lost his wits: he did not remember what he had to say to me." No one answered.

Towards the moment of the capitulation, Madame de Maintenon apparently asked permission to go away; for the King cried, "The chairmen of Madame!" They came and took her away; in less than a quarter of an hour afterwards the King retired also, and nearly everybody else. There was much interchange of glances, nudging with elbows, and then whisperings in the ear. Everybody was full of what had taken place on the ramparts between the King and Madame de Maintenon. Even the soldiers asked what meant that sedan chair, and the King every moment stooping to put his head inside of it. It became necessary gently to silence these questions of the troops. What effect this sight had upon foreigners present, and what they said of it, may be imagined. All over Europe it was as much talked of as the camp of Compiegne itself, with all its pomp and prodigious splendor.

One of the peculiar characters at the court of France at this time was the Duc de Coislin, of whom Saint-Simon gives the following account, which we have considerably abridged:

He was a very little man, of much humor and virtue, but of a politeness that was unendurable, and that passed all bounds, though not incompatible with dignity. He had been lieutenant-general in the army. Upon one occasion, after a battle in which he had taken part, one of the Rhingraves who had been made prisoner fell to his lot. The Duc de Coislin wished to give up to the other his bed, which consisted indeed of but a mattress. They complimented each other so much, the one pressing, the other refusing, that in the end they both slept on the ground, leaving the

mattress between them. The Rhingrave in due time came to Paris and called on the Duc de Coislin. When he was going, there was such a profusion of compliments, and the Duke insisted so much on seeing him out, that the Rhingrave, as a last resource, ran out of the room and double-locked the door outside. M. de Coislin was not thus to be outdone. His apartments were only a few feet above the ground. He opened the window accordingly, leaped out into the court, and arrived thus at the entrance door before the Rhingrave, who thought the Devil must have carried him there. The Duc de Coislin, however, had managed to put his thumb out of joint by this leap. He called in Felix, chief surgeon of the King, who soon put the thumb to rights. Soon afterwards Felix made a call upon M. de Coislin to see how he was, and found that the cure was perfect. As he was about to leave, M. de Coislin must needs open the door for him. Felix, with a shower of bows, tried hard to prevent this; and while they were thus vying in politeness, each with a hand upon the door, the Duke suddenly drew back;—he had put his thumb out of joint again, and Felix was obliged to attend to it on the spot! It may be imagined what laughter this story caused the King, and everybody else, when it became known.

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M. de Coislin could not bear that at parting anybody should give him the "last touch:" a piece of sport, rarely cared for except in early youth, and out of which arises a chase by the person touched, in order to catch him by whom he has been tagged. One evening when the court was at Nancy, and just as everybody was going to bed, M. de Longueville spoke a few words in private to two of his torch-bearers; and then touching the Duc de Coislin, said he had given him the last tag, and scampered away, the Duke hotly pursuing him. Once a little in advance, M. de Longueville hid himself in a doorway, allowed M. de Coislin to pass on, and then went quietly home to bed. Meanwhile the Duke, lighted by the torch-bearers, searched for M. de Longueville all over the

town; but meeting with no success, was obliged to give up the chase, and went home all in a sweat. He was obliged of course to laugh a good deal at this joke, but he evidently did not like it overmuch.

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On another occasion, M. de Coislin went to the Sorbonne to listen to a thesis sustained by the second son of M. de Bouillon. When persons of distinction gave these discourses, it was customary for the princes of the blood, and for many of the court, to go and hear them. M. de Coislin was at that time almost last in order of precedence among the dukes. When he took his seat, therefore, knowing that a number of them would probably arrive, he left several rows of vacant places in front of him, and sat himself down. Immediately afterward, Novion, Chief President of the Parliament, arrived and seated himself in front of M. de Coislin. Astonished at this act of madness, M. de Coislin said not a word, but took an arm-chair; and while Novion turned his head to speak to Cardinal de Bouillon, placed that arm-chair right in front of the Chief President, in such a manner that he was as it were imprisoned, and unable to stir. M. de Coislin then sat down. This was done so rapidly that nobody saw it until it was finished. When once it was observed, a great stir arose. Cardinal de Bouillon tried to intervene. M. de Coislin replied, that since the Chief President had forgotten his position he must be taught it; and would not budge. The other presidents were in a fright; and Novion, enraged by the offense put on him, knew not what to do. It was in vain that Cardinal de Bouillon on one side, and his brother on the other, tried to persuade M. de Coislin to give way. He would not listen to them. They sent a message to him to say that somebody wanted to see him at the door on most important business. But this had no effect. "There is no business so important," replied M. de Coislin, "as that of teaching M. le Premier President what he owes me; and nothing will make me go from this place unless M. le President, whom you see behind me, goes first."

At last M. le Prince was sent for; and he with much persuasion endeavored to induce M. de Coislin to release the Chief President from his prison. But for some time M. de Coislin would listen as little to M. le Prince as he had listened to the others, and threatened to keep Novion thus shut up during all the thesis. At length he consented to set the Chief President free, but only on condition that he left the building immediately; that M. le Prince should guarantee this; and that no "juggling tricks" (that was the term he made use of) should be played off to defeat the agreement. M. le Prince at once gave his word that everything should be as he required; and M. de Coislin then rose, moved away his arm-chair, and said to the Chief President, "Go away, sir! go away, sir!" Novion did on the instant go away, in the utmost confusion, and jumped into his coach. M. de Coislin thereupon took back his chair to its former position, and composed himself to listen again.

On every side M. de Coislin was praised for the firmness he had shown. The princes of the blood called upon him the same evening, and complimented him for the course he had adopted; and so many other visitors came during the evening that his house was quite full until a late hour. On the morrow the King also praised him for his conduct, and severely blamed the Chief President. Nay more: he commanded the latter to go to M. de Coislin, at his house, and beg pardon of him. It is easy to comprehend the shame and despair of Novion at being ordered to take so humiliating a step, especially after what had already happened to him. He prevailed upon M. de Coislin, through the mediation of friends, to spare him this pain; and M. de Coislin had the generosity to do so. He agreed therefore that when Novion called upon him he would pretend to be out, and this was done. The King, when he heard of it, praised very highly the forbearance of the Duke.

The Princesse d'Harcourt may be called the court buffoon, the sorry butt of all their jokes,

although she was a great favorite of Madame de Maintenon. The account which follows has been somewhat shortened and relieved of those sentences which might prove rather offensive to our more refined taste:

The Princesse d'Harcourt was a sort of personage whom it is good to make known, in order better to lay bare a court which did not scruple to receive such as she. She had once been beautiful and gay; but though not old, all her grace and beauty had vanished. The rose had become an ugly thorn. At the time I speak of she was a tall, fat creature, mightily brisk in her movements, with a complexion like milk-porridge; great, ugly, thick lips, and hair like tow, always sticking out and hanging down in disorder, like all the rest of her fittings-out. Dirty, slatternly, always intriguing, pretending, enterprising, quarreling—always low as the grass or high as the rainbow, according to the person with whom she had to deal—she was a blonde Fury, nay more, a Harpy: she had all the effrontery of one, and the deceit and violence; all the avarice and the audacity; all the gluttony.

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Monseigneur le Duc and Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne continually played off pranks upon her. They put, one day, fire-crackers all along the avenue of the chateau at Marly, that led to the Perspective where she lodged. She was horribly afraid of everything. The Duke and Duchess bribed two porters to be ready to take her into the mischief. When she was right in the middle of the avenue the crackers began to go off, and she to cry aloud for mercy; the chairmen set her down and ran for it. There she was, then, struggling in her chair furiously enough to upset it, and yelling like a demon. At this the company, which had gathered at the door of the chateau to see the fun, ran to her assistance, in order to have the pleasure of enjoying the scene more fully. Thereupon she set to abusing everybody right and left,

commencing with Monseigneur and Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne. At another time M. de Bourgogne put a cracker under her chair in the *salon,* where she was playing at piquet. As he was about to set fire to this cracker, some charitable soul warned him that it would maim her, and he desisted.

Sometimes they used to send about twenty Swiss guards, with drums, into her chamber, who roused her from her first sleep by their horrid din. Another time—and these scenes were always at Marly—they waited until very late for her to go to bed and sleep. She lodged not far from the post of the Captain of the Guards, who was at that time the Marechal de Lorges. It had snowed very hard, and had frozen. Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne and her suite gathered snow from the terrace which is on a level with their lodgings; and in order to be better supplied, waked up to assist them the Marechal's people, who did not let them want for ammunition. Then, with a false key and lights, they gently slipped into the chamber of the Princesse d'Harcourt; and suddenly drawing the curtains of her bed, pelted her amain with snowballs. The filthy creature, waking up with a start, bruised and stifled in snow, with which even her ears were filled, with disheveled hair, yelling at the top of her voice, and wriggling like an eel, without knowing where to hide, formed a spectacle that diverted people more than half an hour; so that at last the nymph swam in her bed, from which the water flowed everywhere, slushing all the chamber. It was enough to make one die of laughter. On the morrow she sulked, and was more than ever laughed at for her pains.

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The Princesse d'Harcourt paid her servants so badly that they concocted a return. One fine day they drew up on the Pont Neuf; the coachmen and footmen got down, and came and spoke to her at the door in language she was not used to hear. Her ladies and chambermaid got down and went away, leaving her to shift as she might. Upon this she set herself to harangue the black-

guards who collected, and was only too happy to find a man who mounted upon the seat and drove her home. Another time, Madame de Saint-Simon, returning from Versailles, overtook her walking in full dress in the street, and with her train under her arms. Madame de Saint-Simon stopped, offered her assistance, and found she had been again left by her servants on the Pont Neuf. It was volume second of that story; and even when she came back she found her house deserted, every one having gone away at once by agreement. She was very violent with her servants, beat them, and changed them every day.

Upon one occasion, she took into her service a strong and robust chambermaid, to whom, from the first day of her arrival, she gave many slaps and boxes on the ear. The chambermaid said nothing, but after submitting to this treatment for five or six days, conferred with the other servants; and one morning, while in her mistress's room, locked the door without being perceived, said something to bring down punishment upon her, and at the first box on the ear she received, flew upon the Princesse d'Harcourt, gave her no end of thumps and slaps, knocked her down, kicked her, mauled her from her head to her feet, and when she was tired of this exercise, left her on the ground, all torn and disheveled, howling like a devil. The chambermaid then quitted the room, double-locked the door on the outside, gained the staircase, and fled the house.

IV. Ancients and Moderns. Two groups of writers and public speakers became differentiated before the beginning of the eighteenth century, and their quarrels may be said to mark historically the beginning of the new age. From the tendencies of their thought, as well as from the style of their writings, they came to be known as the Ancients and the Moderns, the former holding closely to tradition

and believing in the existence of things as they are, the latter contending for change and for human progress—conservatives against radicals. In the end the Moderns triumphed, but for a time the war between them was waged relentlessly. So well established a social order as that of Louis XIV could not at once be shaken out of existence, nor could doctrines so firmly established as those of the Church be overthrown without a great social convulsion; so it took time, and the eighteenth century was well into its latter half before the Moderns can be said thoroughly to have established themselves.

"Nothing checks the progress of things, nothing confines the intelligence so much, as admiration of the Ancients" was the motto of the new school of writers, a thesis which they defended against all comers. In many cases, so savage were these wordy battles that friendships were broken, and men became the bitterest of enemies.

A son of Corneille's sister, Bernard Le Borier de Fontenelle, occupied a position in literature midway between the two centuries, and his long life, which rounded out a century, gave him an opportunity thoroughly to master the thought of both Ancients and Moderns. Originally trained by the Jesuits and a student of law, he abandoned his profession and earned great distinction in both literature and science. With aspirations for success in polite literature, he lacked the vision and feeling nec-

essary for success, and produced works that possessed no great merit except artificial elegance. Racine maliciously asserted that no audience ever hissed in disapproval till Fontenelle's tragedy *Aspar* was produced, and that no imaginative work of importance was ever created by him.

Out of these failures, however, came another Fontenelle, a cool, passionless scientist of universal interests, a caustic writer on old beliefs, an ardent advocate of new ideas, a clever, insinuating creator of skepticism. A member of the great scientific societies of France, his influence was widespread throughout his native land. When the Church detected heresy in his writings, he willingly admitted the truth of their claims and abjured his belief, but in such a manner as to leave the impression that after all he had not changed his skeptical notions. His discretion is shown by his remarks, such, for instance, as the following: "If I had my hand full of truths, I should take good care before I opened it." By following the prudent maxims, "Everything is possible" and "Everything is right," he was able to keep the friendship even of those who were inclined to criticize his doctrine. Without affection, he still retained the regard of his companions, for he was kindly and sympathetic in his disposition and so tranquil that the worriments of life never affected him. "It is not a heart which you have in your breast," remarked one of his friends, "it is a brain."

It is scarcely worth while to attempt to trace any further the beginnings or progress of the spirit of skepticism. We might, however, allude again to Pierre Bayle, whose *Dictionary* was published in 1697. The son of a Protestant pastor, educated and converted by the Jesuits, reconverted to his original faith, professor of history and philosophy, removed from his position because of his unorthodox views, he finally settled down to the peaceful and endless studies of a skeptic. His treasures of knowledge were vast, and he followed his inquiries in whatever direction they led, learning, he thought, from them the lesson of universal tolerance: that theology and morality were different things, and that the latter might well remain, though the former were destroyed; that gently and searchingly to question the basis of religion could never be wrong. By such teachings Bayle gently sapped the foundations of religion and politics. He called himself a maker of clouds: "My gift is to create doubts; but they are no more than doubts." The kindly criticism of Bayle was one of the great factors in bringing the light of reason not only to France, but to all Europe as well.

V. The Close of the Seventeenth Century. Well along to the close of the seventeenth century the literature of France must still be considered as classic, monarchical and Christian, but the signs of the change were numerous and easily observed. The influence of English free-thinkers came to take the place

of those of Italy and Spain. Famine, poverty, death, war, oppressive taxation, all had united to begin the destruction of the monarchy, and the whole ruling class was felt to be as grossly licentious as in earlier days, though now, perhaps, with their errors concealed by hypocrisy. The people (and by the people we mean those of the lower classes) were learning the rottenness, the hollowness, the uselessness of the aristocracy and rebelliously exclaimed against it. The time was approaching for more heated controversy, more scathing criticism and finally, for words to give place to deeds.

SAINT HUBERT'S CHAPEL, CHATEAU OF AMBOISE

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POETS AND DRAMATISTS

LYRIC POETS. The eighteenth century was not a productive period among the poets, or at least, if it was productive, their work was rather mediocre in character, and little remains popular at the present time; in fact, the eighteenth century did not produce a great many writers of first rank. A great deal was written in every department of literature, but the best productions were confined to a few individuals, and each one of those distinguished himself in many departments. It was an age in which there were a few giants among many of moderate stature.

Voltaire, speaking of the poems of Saint-Lambert, remarked that they were the only work of the eighteenth century that would reach posterity, and, as a matter of fact, Vol-

taire overestimated them. Delille translated the *Georgics* and was for a time the idol of the salons, which had then been revived. A great favorite of Marie Antoinette, he was equally popular with her court, and in his old age, when blindness came upon him, he was known as the Homer of his age, and after his death the mourning populace crowded about his bier for three whole days. Yet, his poetry is forgotten. Perhaps we may well dismiss the subject by saying that to mention one poet would be a call for the mention of all, and that none really deserve it in a work of this character. The greatest lyricist of the age was Voltaire, and the greatest philosophical poet was the naturalist Buffon, but both of these men distinguished themselves so much more in other lines that we have little space for their poesy.

II. Chenier. Sainte-Beuve characterizes Chenier as "the greatest classic poet since Racine and Boileau," but the verdict of time scarcely justifies so laudatory an expression. In fact, the paucity of his work and the character of it would, perhaps, doom it to forgetfulness if it were not for the romantic interest which surrounded his career.

Andre Chenier was born at Constantinople in 1762, of a French father and Greek mother. Educated in France, he traveled extensively in Switzerland and Italy, and finally for three desert years remained secretary to the French ambassador in England. The passionate nature which he inherited from his parents could not

From Painting by Bastien-Lepage, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

JOAN OF ARC

"LISTENING TO THE VOICES"

harmonize with the dull English aristocrats, as he termed them, and on his return to France the spirit of the Revolution caught him in its fury and drove him into opposition to the Jacobin party, so that in March, 1794, he was arrested and taken to the prison of Saint-Lazare, charged with the sedition which his writings appeared to justify.

On the pretext that he was engaged in a conspiracy among the eight hundred prisoners that crowded Saint-Lazare, he, with twenty-five others, was condemned to death as an enemy of the people and a conspirator to murder the members of the Committee of Safety and reëstablish royalty in France. On the 25th of July there was a brief travesty of a trial and on the same evening at six o'clock the twenty-six conspirators were executed. Only three days afterward Robespierre and many of his accomplices perished in the same manner, and the Reign of Terror was at an end.

Very little of Chenier's poetry survives; in fact, only two poems, *The Hymn to the Swiss* and *The Tennis Game,* were published by himself. After his death *The Young Captive* and other poems, many of them fragmentary, were issued. He cannot be said to have introduced the romantic school of poetry, but many, regarding him highly, imitated and studied him as a master. An ardent lover of liberty, saturated with a spirit of Greek verse, he nevertheless lacked the power for sustained effort, but his pathetic death when only thirty-one

may really have extinguished a genius capable of great things. At any rate, if he may not be considered one of the greatest poets of the time, he will always occupy a notable position in French literature.

Among the prisoners in Saint-Lazare were many of Chenier's friends, including the beautiful young Duchess of Fleury, who inspired the poet to write *The Young Captive,* of which we give a translation below:

"The corn in peace fills out its golden ear;
Through the long summer days, the flowers without a fear
Drink in the strength of noon.
And I, a flower like them, as young, as fair, as pure,
Though at the present hour some trouble I endure,
I would not die so soon!

"No, let the stoic heart call upon Death as kind!
For me, I weep and hope; before the bitter wind
I bend like some lithe palm.
If there be long, sad days, others are bright and fleet;
Alas! what honeyed draught holds nothing but the sweet?
What sea is ever calm?

"And still within my breast nestles illusion bright;
In vain these prison walls shut out the noonday light;
Fair Hope has lent me wings.
So from the fowler's net, again set free to fly,
More swift, more joyous, through the summer sky,
Philomel soars and sings.

"Is it my lot to die? In peace I lay me down,
In peace awake again, a peace nor care doth drown,
Nor fell remorse destroy.
My welcome shines from every morning face,
And to these downcast souls my presence in this place
Almost restores their joy.

"The voyage of life is but begun for me,
And of the landmarks I must pass, I see
So few behind me stand.
At life's long banquet, now before me set,
My lips have hardly touched the cup as yet
Still brimming in my hand.

"I only know the spring; I would see autumn brown;
Like the bright sun, that all the seasons crown,
I would round out my year.
A tender flower, the sunny garden's boast,
I have but seen the fires of morning's host;
Would eve might find me here!

"O Death, canst thou not wait? Depart from me, and go
To comfort those sad hearts whom pale despair, and woe,
And shame, perchance have wrung.
For me the woods still offer verdant ways,
The Loves their kisses, and the Muses praise:
I would not die so young!"

Thus, captive too, and sad, my lyre none the less
Woke at the plaint of one who breathed its own distress,
Youth in a prison cell;
And throwing off the yoke that weighed upon me too,
I strove in all the sweet and tender words I knew
Her gentle grief to tell.

Melodious witness of my captive days,
These rhymes shall make some lover of my lays
Seek the maid I have sung.
Grace sits upon her brow, and all shall share,
Who see her charms, her grief and her despair:
They too "must die so young"!

III. The Drama. Between Racine and Voltaire appeared only Crebillon, who might be considered as of importance, although there were many who cultivated the tragic muse, and

plays of all kinds were produced in abundance; but the hands that wrote them were manifestly inferior to Racine, and the only writer of great tragedies during this epoch was Voltaire himself.

One development of the age, however, deserves attention. The admiration for elegance of form and beauty in structure which had characterized the classic age of Louis XIV gave way before the appearance of the emotional element in the drama. A powerful contributing factor in this change was the increase in wealth and standing of the great middle classes, who became patrons of the drama and naturally inquired why the stage should always be filled with kings, queens and aristocrats; or if, perchance, a representative of the middle class appeared on the stage, why he should be the subject of ridicule or made to appear foolish and ignorant. Moreover, the associations of the middle class were with everyday affairs, and the joys and griefs of domestic life were not only of the greatest importance to them, but were what they could best understand and interpret. The new philosophers were contending that man is naturally good, that human beings prefer the life of virtue, and that the errors of mankind should be treated with sympathy and tenderness. The natural outcome of these feelings and beliefs was the production of a more serious style of drama, which differed widely from the tragicomedy of Corneille, as we have intimated, and

which came to be known as the *comedie larmoyante* (comedy of tears), though it might more properly be termed the comedy of the common people.

In these plays the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, are the chief themes that throw the plays midway between tragedy and comedy. Chaussee, in his *Melanide,* omits the comic element almost entirely and uses a plot in which father and son, unrecognized by each other, are rivals in love. Later the wife and mother, who was supposed to be dead, returns, is received with affection by the husband, and reconciles him to his son. Sedaine, in his *Le Philosophe Sans le Savoir* (*The Ignorant Philosopher*), is the only surviving bourgeois drama of the eighteenth century. The plot has life and reality, though it is exceedingly simple. The daughter of a merchant is to be married, but on the same day his son, resenting an insult which was offered to the father, must expose his life in a duel. Old Antoine offers to take his young master's place; Antoine's daughter loves the duelist; and the emotions of the merchant's household are the theme of the comedy.

IV. Beaumarchais. Pierre Augustin Caron (1732–1799), who afterwards assumed the name Beaumarchais, wrote but two successful plays, yet he is universally ranked as the most important dramatist of the eighteenth century. His father was a watchmaker in Paris, and the dramatist himself was educated for that trade,

but an early proficiency in music secured him a position as teacher to the daughters of Louis XV. He was a shrewd business man and amassed a considerable fortune in speculations, which ultimately led to lawsuits. These suggested to him the writing of a series of memoirs, which attacked judicial injustice in such an audacious and witty way that they were eagerly read and increased the discontent existing against society. The Revolution in America attracted his attention, and he furnished the colonists with supplies, coming out of the undertaking with a claim or bill against the United States which was not settled for a long time.

His *Barbier de Seville* (*The Barber of Seville*) is a five-act comedy which he rearranged out of a comic opera that had been a failure. A still more famous play is the sequel to the *Barber,* named *Le Mariage de Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*), a democratic and revolutionary drama of unparalleled success. His other plays were all failures, and have been forgotten.

V. "The Barber of Seville." The *Barber* was produced in 1775 in the *Theatre Français* and, as we have intimated, was at first a failure. It is Spanish in its scenes, but essentially French in tone and manner. Figaro, who is the type of intriguing servant that appears in the plays of Plautus and Moliere, has proved to be one of the strongest characters in literature. The plot is simple, the incidents in-

genious, the dialogue brisk and the character-drawing effective. Figaro himself may be considered as the new democratic spirit incarnate.

Doctor Bartolo is the zealous guardian of Rosina, but her lover, Count Almaviva, disguises himself as a student and visits her dwelling. In an ingenious manner her guardian is outwitted, with the result that Count Almaviva and Rosina are duly wedded.

VI. "THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO." Keener wit, swifter action, more biting social satire, are found in *The Marriage of Figaro,* which was produced at the same theater nine years later. It is not probable that Beaumarchais realized what effect his play would produce; in fact, some one has said, "He wished to fire a squib, and he exploded a magazine." The light-hearted, shrewd scapegrace Figaro was just the character to assist in the destruction of the hollow society of the epoch and in the encouragement of the great Revolution. The history of the play is not unlike that of Moliere's *Tartuffe,* for it was so full of revolutionary ideas that its production was forbidden; but the author read the play in the houses of the great at every opportunity offered him, and it everywhere met with such enthusiastic approval that finally its production was authorized; when the first performance took place it is said that the crush of spectators was so great that three persons lost their lives by suffocation. That society itself was disintegrating

rapidly is proved by the fact that this attack upon its existence was acted by the court itself, with Marie Antoinette herself carrying one of the principal characters.

In some respects there are points of strong resemblance between Beaumarchais and the English dramatist Sheridan, but the French author achieved a wider and more universal fame when Rossini set *The Barber of Seville* to music and Mozart performed a like service for *The Marriage of Figaro.*

In the following selection the scene is laid in the boudoir of the young Countess of Almaviva, the Rosina of the *Barber.* She is seated there alone when her maid Susanna introduces the page Cherubino, who has been banished from the house because of the jealousy of the Count:

Susanna. Here's our young Captain, Madame.

Cherubino (*timidly*). The title is a sad reminder that—that I must leave this delightful home and the godmother who has been so kind—

Susanna. And so beautiful!

Cherubino (*sighing*). Ah, yes!

Susanna (*mocking his sigh*). Ah, yes! Just look at his hypocritical eyelids! Madame, make him sing his new song. (*She gives it to him.*) Come now, my beautiful bluebird, sing away.

Countess. Does the manuscript say who wrote this—song?

Susanna. The blushes of guilt betray him.

Cherubino. Madame, I—I—tremble so.

Susanna. Ta, ta, ta, ta—! Come, modest author—since you are so commanded. Madame, I'll accompany him.

Countess (*to Susanna*). Take my guitar.

(*Cherubino sings his ballad to the air of "Malbrouck." The Countess reads the words of it from his manuscript, with an occasional glance at him; he sometimes looks at her and sometimes lowers his eyes as he sings. Susanna, accompanying him, watches them both, laughing.*)

Countess (*folding the song*). Enough, my boy. Thank you. It is very good—full of feeling—

Susanna. Ah! as for feeling—this is a young man who —well!

(*Cherubino tries to stop her by catching hold of her dress. Susanna whispers to him.*) Ah, you good-for-nothing! I'm going to tell her. (*Aloud.*) Well—Captain! We'll amuse ourselves by seeing how you look in one of my dresses!

Countess. Susanna, how *can* you go on so?

Susanna (*going up to Cherubino and measuring herself with him*). He's just the right height. Off with your coat. (*She draws it off.*)

Countess. But what if some one should come?

Susanna. What if they do? We're doing no wrong. But I'll lock the door, just the same. (*Locks it.*) I want to see him in a woman's head-dress!

Countess. Well, you'll find my little cap in my dressing-room on the toilet table.

(*Susanna gets the cap, and then, sitting down on a stool, she makes Cherubino kneel before her and arranges it on his hair.*)

Susanna. Goodness, isn't he a pretty girl? I'm jealous. Cherubino, you're altogether *too* pretty.

Countess. Undo his collar a little; that will give a more feminine air. (*Susanna loosens his collar so as to show his neck.*) Now push up his sleeves, so that the under ones show more. (*While Susanna rolls up Cherubino's sleeves, the Countess notices her lost ribbon around his wrist.*) What is that? My ribbon?

Susanna. Ah! I'm very glad you've seen it, for I told him I should tell. I should certainly have taken it away from him if the Count hadn't come just then; for I am almost as strong as he is.

Countess (*with surprise, unrolling the ribbon*). There's blood on it!

Cherubino. Yes, I was tightening the curb of my horse this morning, he curvetted and gave me a push with his head, and the bridle stud grazed my arm.

Countess. I never saw a ribbon used as a bandage before.

Susanna. Especially a *stolen* ribbon. What may all those things be—the curb, the curvetting, the bridle stud? (*Glances at his arms.*) What white arms he has! just like a woman's. Madame, they are whiter than mine.

Countess. Never mind that, but run and find me some oiled silk.

(*Susanna goes out, after humorously pushing Cherubino over so that he falls forward on his hands. He and the Countess look at each other for some time; then she breaks the silence.*)

Countess. I hope you are plucky enough. Don't show yourself before the Count again to-day. We'll tell him to hurry up your commission in his regiment.

Cherubino. I already have it, Madame. Basilio brought it to me. (*He draws the commission from his pocket and hands it to her.*)

Countess. Already! They haven't lost any time. (*She opens it.*) Oh, in their hurry they've forgotten to add the seal to it.

Susanna (*returning with the oiled silk*). Seal what?

Countess. His commission in the regiment.

Susanna. Already?

Countess. That's what I said.

Susanna. And the bandage?

Countess. Oh, when you are getting my things, take a ribbon from one of *your* caps. (*Susanna goes out again.*)

Countess. This ribbon is of my favorite color. I must tell you I was greatly displeased at your taking it.

Cherubino. That one would heal me quickest.

Countess. And—why so?

Cherubino. When a ribbon—has pressed the head, and—touched the skin of one—

Countess (*hastily*). Very strange—then it can cure wounds? I never heard that before. I shall certainly try it on the first wound of any of—my maids—

Cherubino (*sadly*). I must go away from here!

Countess. But not for always? (*Cherubino begins to weep.*) And now you are crying! At that prediction of Figaro?

Cherubino. I'm just where he said I'd be. (*Some one knocks on the door.*)

Countess. Who can be knocking like that?

The Count (*outside*). Open the door!

Countess. Heavens! It's my husband. Where can you hide?

The Count (*outside*). Open the door, I say.

Countess. There's no one here, you see.

The Count. But who are you talking to then?

Countess. To you, I suppose. (*To Cherubino.*) Hide yourself, quick—in the dressing-room!

Cherubino. Ah, after this morning, he'd kill me if he found me *here.*

(*He runs into the dressing-room on the right, which is also Susanna's room; the Countess, after locking him in and taking the key, admits the Count.*)

Count. You don't usually lock yourself in, Madame.

Countess. I—I—was gossiping with Susanna. She's gone. (*Pointing to her maid's room.*)

Count. And you seem very much agitated, Madame.

Countess. Not at all, I assure you! We were talking about you. She's just gone—as I told you.

Count. I must say, Madame, you and I seem to be surrounded by spiteful people. Just as I'm starting for a ride, I'm handed a note which informs me that a certain person whom I suppose far enough away is to visit you this evening.

Countess. The bold fellow, whoever he is, will have to come here, then; for I don't intend to leave my room to-day.

(*Something falls heavily in the dressing-room where Cherubino is.*)

Count. Ah, Madame, something dropped just then!

Countess. I didn't hear anything.

Count. You must be very absent-minded, then. Somebody is in that room!

Countess. Who do you think could be there?

Count. Madame, that is what I'm asking *you.* I have just come in.

Countess. Probably it's Susanna wandering about.

Count (*pointing*). But you just told me that she went that way.

Countess. This way or that—I don't know which.

Count. Very well, Madame, I must see her.—Come here, Susanna.

Countess. She cannot. Pray wait! She's but half dressed. She's trying on things that I've given her for her wedding.

Count. Dressed or not, I wish to see her at once.

Countess. I can't prevent your doing so anywhere else, but here—

Count. You may say what you choose—I *will* see her.

Countess. I thoroughly believe you'd like to see her in that state! but—

Count. Very well, Madame. If Susanna can't come out, at least she can talk. (*Turning toward the dressing-room.*) Susanna, are you there? Answer, I command you.

Countess (*peremptorily*). Don't answer, Susanna! I forbid you! Sir, how can you be such a petty tyrant? Fine suspicions, indeed!

(*Susanna slips by and hides behind the Countess's bed without being noticed either by her or by the Count.*)

Count. They are all the easier to dispel. I can see that it would be useless to ask you for the key, but it's easy enough to break in the door. Here, somebody!

Countess. Will you really make yourself the laughing-stock of the chateau for such a silly suspicion?

Count. You are quite right. I shall simply force the door myself. I am going for tools.

Countess. Sir, if your conduct were prompted by love, I'd forgive your jealousy for the sake of the motive. But its cause is only your vanity.

Count. Love *or* vanity, Madame, I mean to know who is in that room! And to guard against any tricks, I am going to lock the door to your maid's room. You, Madame, will kindly come with me, and without any noise, if you please. (*He leads her away.*) As for the Susanna in the dressing-room, she will please wait a few minutes.

Countess (*going out with him*). Sir, I assure you—

Susanna (*coming out from behind the bed and running to the dressing-room*). Cherubino! Open quick! It's Susanna. (*Cherubino hurries out of the dressing-room.*) Escape—you haven't a minute to lose!

Cherubino. Where can I go?

Susanna. I don't know, I don't know at all! but do go somewhere!

Cherubino (*running to the window, then coming back*). The window isn't so very high.

Susanna (*frightened and holding him back*). He'll kill himself!

Cherubino. Ah, Susie, I'd rather jump into a gulf than put the Countess in danger. (*He snatches a kiss, then runs to the window, hesitates, and finally jumps down into the garden.*)

Susanna. Ah! (*She falls fainting into an arm-chair. Recovering slowly, she rises, and seeing Cherubino running through the garden she comes forward panting.*) He's far away already! . . . Little scamp! as nimble as he is handsome! (*She next runs to the dressing-room.*) Now, Count Almaviva, knock as hard as you like, break down the door. Plague take me if I answer you. (*Goes into the dressing-room and shuts the door.*)

(*Count and Countess return.*)

Count. Now, Madame, consider well before you drive me to extremes.

Countess. I—I beg of you—!

Count (*preparing to burst open the door*). You can't cajole me now.

Countess (*throwing herself on her knees*). Then I will open it! Here is the key.

Count. So it is *not* Susanna?

Countess. No, but it's no one who should offend you.

Count. If it's a man I kill him! Unworthy wife! You wish to stay shut up in your room—you shall stay in it long enough, I promise you. *Now* I understand the note—my suspicions are justified!

Countess. Will you listen to me one minute?

Count. Who is in that room?

Countess. Your page.

Count. Cherubino! The little scoundrel!—just let me catch him! I don't wonder you were so agitated.

Countess. I—I assure you we were only planning an innocent joke.

(*The Count snatches the key, and goes to the dressing-room door; the Countess throws herself at his feet.*)

Countess. Have mercy, Count! Spare this poor child; and although the disorder in which you will find him—

Count. What, Madame? What do you mean? What disorder?

Countess. He was just changing his coat—his neck and arms are bare—

(*The Countess throws herself into a chair and turns away her head.*)

Count (*running to the dressing-room*). Come out here, you young villain!

Count (*seeing Susanna come out of the dressing-room*). Eh! Why, it *is* Susanna! (*Aside.*) What a lesson!

Susanna (*mocking him*). "I will kill him! I will kill him!" Well, then, why don't you kill this mischievous page?

Count (*to the Countess, who at the sight of Susanna shows the greatest surprise*). So *you* also play astonishment, Madame?

Countess. Why shouldn't I?

Count. But perhaps she wasn't alone in there. I'll

find out. (*He goes into the dressing-room.*)

Countess. Susanna, I'm nearly dead.

Count (*aside, as he returns*). No one there! So this time I really am wrong. (*To the Countess, coldly.*) You excel at comedy, Madame.

Susanna. And what about me, sir?

Count. And so do you.

Countess. Aren't you glad you found her instead of Cherubino? (*Meaningly.*) You are generally pleased to come across her.

Susanna. Madame ought to have let you break in the doors, call the servants—

Count. Yes, it's quite true—I'm at fault—I'm humiliated enough! But why didn't you answer, you cruel girl, when I called you?

Susanna. I was dressing as well as I could—with the aid of pins, and Madame knew why she forbade me to answer. She had her lessons.

Count. Why don't you help me get pardon, instead of making me out as bad as you can?

Countess. Did I marry you to be eternally subjected to jealousy and neglect? I mean to join the Ursulines, and—

Count. But, Rosina!

Countess. I am no longer the Rosina whom you loved so well. I am only poor Countess Almaviva, deserted wife of a madly jealous husband.

Count. I assure you, Rosina, this man, this letter, had excited me so—

Countess. I never gave my consent.

Count. What, you knew about it?

Countess. This rattlepate Figaro, without my sanction—

Count. He did it, eh! and Basilio pretended that a peasant brought it. Crafty wag, ready to impose on everybody!

Countess. You beg pardon, but you never grant pardon. If I grant it, it shall only be on condition of a general amnesty.

Count. Well, then, so be it. I agree. But I don't understand how your sex can adapt itself to circumstances so quickly and so nicely. You were certainly much agitated; and for that matter, you are yet.

Countess. Men aren't sharp enough to distinguish between honest indignation at unjust suspicion, and the confusion of guilt.

Count. We men think we know something of politics, but we are only children. Madame, the King ought to name you his ambassador to London. And now pray forget this unfortunate business, so humiliating for me.

Countess. For us both.

Count. Won't you tell me again that you forgive me?

Countess. Have I said *that,* Susanna?

Count. Ah, say it now.

Countess. Do you deserve it, culprit?

Count. Yes, honestly, for my repentance.

Countess (*giving him her hand*). How weak I am! What an example I set you, Susanna! He'll never believe in a woman's anger.

Susanna. You are prisoner on parole; and you shall see we are honorable.

MARSEILLES HARBOR

CHAPTER XIX

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (CONTINUED)
NOVELISTS

THE NOVEL. The general course of eighteenth century ideas was reflected in the novels of that period, beginning, as they did, with artistic stories, and terminating finally in tales written for the purpose of propagating the new philosophy. In fact, in *Gil Blas,* the one great novel of the epoch, may be traced this same development of thought, for the latter part of the lengthy tale is much different in purpose and sentiment from the beginning. *Gil Blas* was not fully appreciated in France at the time it appeared, and before it reached the rank it deserved Smollett had translated it into English, and it at once achieved distinction and began to exert a strong influence upon the

literature of Great Britain; Fielding and his contemporaries used the French novel as a model for their own work, and English fiction still bears traces of the genius of Lesage.

The four noteworthy novelists of the age are Lesage, Marivaux, the Abbe Prevost and Saint-Pierre, three of whom produced novels of world interest and one a series of exquisite stories, which, however, have not attained the wide popularity they deserve. We shall consider these authors in the order named.

II. Lesage. Alain René Lesage was born in 1668 and at the age of fourteen was left an orphan in the charge of uncles, who deprived him of his property and left him to make his way alone. In this he was successful, and enjoys the distinction of having been the first Frenchman who really made a living from his writings. At the age of twenty-two he went to Paris, studied law, and four years later married and gave up the law for literature. He was successful enough to attract the attention of the Abbe de Lyonne, who gave him a small pension, which, with what he earned by hack work, was sufficient to support himself and his small family. He was happy in his quiet, respectable domestic life, which proved uneventful, and though he died poor, it was rather because he was independent by nature than because he was extravagant in his habits. Popular in a personal way during his lifetime, he was not fully appreciated until after his death, which occurred in 1747.

Lesage was not an original genius, but he was a keen observer and possessed such a happy faculty of assimilating the ideas of others that his writings became highly influential; and, though he cannot be said to have created the modern realistic novel, yet he foreshadowed it more deeply than any other writer of his time. At the beginning he was dependent quite largely upon Spanish originals for his plots and characters, but, like some of his predecessors, he made them all thoroughly French, and the atmosphere of everything he wrote belongs exclusively to his native land. His first real success was not attained until he was nearly forty and then by the means of two dramas, *Crispin Rival de son Maitre* (*The Jester, Rival of his Master*) and *Don Cesar Ursin.* The first is a gay little one-act farce, in which a valet in masquerade courts his master's daughter. The second was a longer and more finished play, which met its success at Versailles, while the farce succeeded among the populace. The judgment of time has favored that of the people, for *Crispin* is still a classic, and *Don Cesar* is deservedly forgotten.

Turcaret, his one great drama, was first refused by the *Theatre Français,* but, after having been remodeled, it was accepted and achieved great popularity because of its novelty. Turcaret, a government contractor of the shrewd, unscrupulous class, has come to Paris to enjoy the money he has made, while his countrified wife has been told to remain at

home. Turcaret is flattered and fleeced by a baroness whom he loves, but who promptly throws him over for a younger lover, upon whom she showers the contractor's gifts. By clever knavery, the valets, grisettes and hangers-on all steal what they can and better their condition at the expense of their master, whose vulgar character is exposed. The wife comes and claims him at an evening reception; his sister, coarse-grained and rough, comes to sell finery to the baroness, and finally the contractor loses all his ill-gotten wealth and is sent off to prison. The daring innovation of picturing upon the stage an unscrupulous class who had made money during the time of the Spanish War stirred up ill-feeling in every direction, and the play was in danger of suppression; in fact, it was only saved by royal authority. The class whom Lesage had ridiculed hired men to hiss the actors in the theater, reviled the author on every occasion, and offered him large sums to withdraw his play; but such opposition only confirmed him in his determination to continue it.

However, he abandoned play-writing for the legitimate stage and devoted himself thenceforth more exclusively to fiction and to plays for the actors at the "fairs." One of the first of his stories, his *Le Diable Boiteaux,* is a satire on contemporary Parisian society in the guise of a Spanish tale. The spirit liberated from a bottle in a magician's laboratory entertains his master by showing him the sights of a great

city at night, unroofing the buildings and explaining from time to time the strange and startling things that are revealed. The opportunity is not lost to present a series of vivid episodes, which give free play to the author's satire.

However, the title of Lesage to immortality rests upon his one great novel.

III. "GIL BLAS." The beginning of *Gil Blas* is much like that of the old Spanish picaresque novel, but as the author proceeds in his work it becomes a more and more realistic picture of life and manners. Moreover, Gil Blas himself, while a tricky young scoundrel in his way, is never guilty of any great crimes; his villainy is hardly ever serious, and he repeatedly finds that honesty is the best policy; in fact, eventually, he becomes a creditable citizen. In the ordinary sense of the term he is not a hero, but he is good-natured, good-tempered, a keen observer of life, and to the reader an agreeable companion. Lesage is not a preacher, and the morality of the book is often questionable, but at no time do we feel that it is essentially base. Perhaps Sir Walter Scott has characterized it in the best possible manner:

> All is easy and good-humored, gay, light, and lively; even the cavern of the robbers is illuminated with a ray of that wit with which Lesage enlightens his whole narrative. It is a work which renders the reader pleased with himself and with mankind, where faults are placed before him in the light of follies rather than vices, and where misfortunes are so interwoven with the ludicrous that we laugh in the very act of sympathizing with them.

The author uses, by way of introduction, a little message from Gil Blas to the reader. It is a short tale in the following words:

Two students traveled together from Penafiel to Salamanca. Finding themselves tired and thirsty, they stopped by the side of a spring on the road. While they were resting there, after having quenched their thirst, by chance they espied on a stone near them, even with the ground, part of an inscription, in some degree effaced by time, and by the tread of flocks in the habit of watering at that spring. Having washed the stone, they were able to trace these words in the dialect of Castille; *Aqui està encerrada el alma del licenciado Pedro Garcias.* (Here lies interred the soul of the licentiate Peter Garcias.)

"Hey-day!" roars out the younger, a lively, heedless fellow, who could not get on with his deciphering for laughter: "This is a good joke indeed: 'Here lies interred the soul.'.... A soul interred!.... I should like to know the whimsical author of this ludicrous epitaph." With this sneer he got up to go away. His companion, who had more sense, said within himself: "Underneath this stone lies some mystery; I will stay, and see the end of it." Accordingly, he let his comrade depart, and without loss of time began digging round about the stone with his knife till he got it up. Under it he found a purse of leather, containing an hundred ducats with a card on which was written these words in Latin: "Whoever thou art who hast wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, I appoint thee my heir, in the hope thou wilt make a better use of my fortune than I have done!" The student, out of his wits at the discovery, replaced the stone in its former position, and set out again on the Salamanca road with the soul of the licentiate in his pocket.

The novel, as translated by Smollett, begins with the following paragraph, which is a good

example of the style of Lesage and shows how promptly and cleverly he solicits the interest of the reader:

My father, Blas of Santillane, after having borne arms for a long time in the Spanish service, retired to his native place. There he married a chamber-maid who was not exactly in her teens, and I made my debut on this stage ten months after marriage. They afterwards went to live at Oviedo, where my mother got into service, and my father obtained a situation equally adapted to his capacities as a squire. As their wages were their fortune, I might have got my education as I could, had it not been for an uncle of mine in the town, a canon, by name Gil Perez. He was my mother's eldest brother, and my godfather. Figure to yourself a little fellow, three feet and a half high, as fat as you can conceive, with a head sunk deep between his shoulders, and you have my uncle to the life. For the rest of his qualities, he was an ecclesiastic, and of course thought of nothing but good living, I mean in the flesh as well as in the spirit, with the means of which good living his stall, no lean one, provided him.

As a boy Gil Blas, having gained a reputation for some scholarship, at about seventeen years of age was sent by his uncle to the University of Salamanca, provided with a few ducats for the journey, and a mule, the sale of which at Salamanca would still further increase his funds. The reception which Gil Blas accorded this generosity is told as follows:

He could not have proposed to me anything more agreeable: for I was dying to see a little of life. At the same time, I was not such a fool as to betray my satisfaction; and when it came to the hour of parting, by the sensibility I discovered at taking leave of my dear uncle, to whom I was so much obliged, and by calling in the

stage effect of grief, I so softened the good soul, that he put his hand deeper into his pocket than he would have done, could he have pried into all that was passing in the interior of my hypocritical little heart. Before my departure I took a last leave of my papa and mamma, who loaded me with an ample inheritance of good advice.

The novel is a long one, covering about six hundred very closely printed pages, and it is impossible for us to give an epitome of the adventures of the interesting scapegrace. He is fortunate enough rather early in his career to secure a place with the Licentiate Sédillo. The end of his services there is depicted in the following extract:

I stayed three months with the Licentiate Sédillo, without complaining of bad nights. At the end of that time he fell sick. The distemper was a fever; and it inflamed the gout. For the first time in his life, which had been long, he called in a physician. Doctor Sangrado was sent for; the Hippocrates of Valladolid. Dame Jacintha was for sending for the lawyer first, and touched that string; but the patient thought it was time enough, and had a little will of his own upon some points. Away I went therefore for Doctor Sangrado; and brought him with me. A tall, withered, wan executioner of the sisters three, who had done all their justice for at least these forty years! This learned forerunner of the undertaker had an aspect suited to his office: his words were weighed to a scruple; and his jargon sounded grand in the ears of the uninitiated. His arguments were mathematical demonstrations: and his opinions had the merit of originality.

After studying my master's symptoms, he began with medical solemnity: "The question here is, to remedy an obstructed perspiration. Ordinary practitioners, in this case, would follow the old routine of salines, diuretics, volatile salts, sulphur and mercury; but purges and su-

dorifics are a deadly practice! Chemical preparations are edged tools in the hands of the ignorant. My methods are more simple, and more efficacious. What is your usual diet?" "I live pretty much upon soups," replied the canon, "and eat my meat with a good deal of gravy." "Soups and gravy!" exclaimed the petrified doctor. "Upon my word, it is no wonder you are ill. High living is a poisoned bait; a trap set by sensuality, to cut short the days of wretched man. We must have done with pampering our appetites: the more insipid, the more wholesome. The human blood is not a gravy! Why then you must give it such a nourishment as will assimilate with the particles of which it is composed. You drink wine, I warrant you?" "Yes," said the licentiate, "but diluted." "Oh, finely diluted, I dare say," rejoined the physician. "This is licentiousness with a vengeance! A frightful course of feeding! Why, you ought to have died years ago. How old are you?" "I am in my sixty-ninth year," replied the canon, "So I thought," quoth the practitioner, "a premature old age is always the consequence of intemperance. If you had only drank clear water all your life, and had been contented with plain food, boiled apples for instance, you would not have been a martyr to the gout, and your limbs would have performed their functions with lubricity. But I do not despair of setting you on your legs again, provided you give yourself up to my management." The licentiate promised to be upon his good behavior.

Sangrado then sent me for a surgeon of his own choosing, and took from him six good porringers of blood, by way of a beginning, to remedy this obstinate obstruction. He then said to the surgeon: "Master Martin Onez, you will take as much more three hours hence, and to-morrow you will repeat the operation. It is a mere vulgar error, that the blood is of any use in the system; the faster you draw it off, the better. A patient has nothing to do but to keep himself quiet; with him, to live is merely not to die; he has no more occasion for blood than a man in a

trance; in both cases, life consists exclusively in pulsation and respiration.'' When the doctor had ordered these frequent and copious bleedings, he added a drench of warm water at very short intervals, maintaining that water in sufficient quantities was the grand secret in the materia medica. He then took his leave, telling Dame Jacintha and me with an air of confidence, that he would answer for the patient's life, if his system was fairly pursued. The housekeeper, though protesting secretly against this new practice, bowed to his superior authority. In fact, we set on the kettles in a hurry; and, as the physician had desired us above all things to give him enough, we began with pouring down two or three pints at as many gulps. An hour after, we beset him again; then, returning to the attack time after time, we fairly poured a deluge into his poor stomach. The surgeon, on the other hand, taking out the blood as we put in the water, we reduced the old canon to death's door, in less than two days.

This venerable ecclesiastic, able to hold it out no longer, as I pledged him in a large glass of his new cordial, said to me in a faint voice: ''Hold, Gil Blas, do not give me any more, my friend. It is plain death will come when he will come, in spite of water; and, though I have hardly a drop of blood in my veins, I am no better for getting rid of the enemy. The ablest physician in the world can do nothing for us, when our time is expired. Fetch a notary; I will make my will.'' At these last words, pleasing enough to my fancy, I affected to appear unhappy; and concealing my impatience to be gone, ''Sir,'' said I, ''you are not reduced so low, thank God, but you may yet recover.'' ''No, no,'' interrupted he, ''my good fellow, it is all over. I feel the gout shifting, and the hand of death is upon me. Make haste, and go where I told you.'' I saw, sure enough, that he changed every moment: and the case was so urgent, that I ran as fast as I could, leaving him in Dame Jacintha's care, who was more afraid than myself of his dying without a will. I laid hold of the first notary I could find. ''Sir,'' said I,

"the Licentiate Sédillo, my master, is drawing near his end; he wants to settle his affairs; there is not a moment to be lost." The notary was a dapper little fellow, who loved his joke; and inquired who was our physician. At the name of Doctor Sangrado, hurrying on his cloak and hat: "For mercy's sake!" cried he, "let us set off with all possible speed; for this doctor dispatches business so fast, that our fraternity cannot keep pace with him. That fellow spoils half my jobs."

Gil Blas secures a position with the Doctor Sangrado mentioned in the previous paragraph, and in the following extract we learn of his experiences with that peculiar practitioner:

I determined to throw myself in the way of Signor Arias de Londona, and to look out for a new berth in his register; but as I was on my way to No Thoroughfare, who should come across me but Doctor Sangrado, whom I had not seen since the day of my master's death. I took the liberty of touching my hat. He kenned me in a twinkling, though I had changed my dress; and with as much warmth as his temperament would allow him, "Hey day!" said he, "the very lad I wanted to see; you have never been out of my thought. I have occasion for a clever fellow about me, and pitched upon you as the very thing, if you can read and write." "Sir," replied I, "if that is all you require, I am your man." "In that case," rejoined he, "we need look no further. Come home with me; it will be all comfort; I shall behave to you like a brother. You will have no wages, but everything will be found you. You shall eat and drink according to the true faith, and be taught to cure all diseases. In a word, you shall rather be my young Sangrado than my footman."

I closed in with the doctor's proposal, in the hope of becoming an Esculapius under so inspired a master. He carried me home on the spur of the occasion, to install

me in my honorable employment; which honorable employment consisted in writing down the name and residence of the patients who sent for him in his absence. There had indeed been a register for this purpose, kept by an old domestic; but she had not the gift of spelling accurately, and wrote a most perplexing hand. This account I was to keep. It might truly be called a bill of mortality; for my members all went from bad to worse during the short time they continued in this system. I was a sort of book-keeper for the other world, to take places in the stage, and to see that the first come were the first served. My pen was always in my hand, for Doctor Sangrado had more practice than any physician of his time in Valladolid. He had got into reputation with the public by a certain professional slang, humored by a medical face, and some extraordinary cases, more honored by implicit faith than scrupulous investigation.

He was in no want of patients, nor consequently of property. He did not keep the best house in the world: we lived with some little attention to economy. The usual bill of fare consisted of peas, beans, boiled apples or cheese. He considered this food as best suited to the human stomach, that is to say, as most amenable to the grinders, whence it was to encounter the process of digestion. Nevertheless, easy as was their passage, he was not for stopping the way with too much of them: and, to be sure, he was in the right. But though he cautioned the maid and me against repletion in respect of solids, it was made up by free permission to drink as much water as we liked. Far from prescribing us any limits there, he would tell us sometimes: "Drink, my children; health consists in the pliability and moisture of the parts. Drink water by pails full, it is an universal dissolvent; water liquefies all the salts. Is the course of the blood a little sluggish? this grand principle sets it forward: too rapid? its career is checked." Our doctor was so orthodox on this head, that he drank nothing himself but water, though advanced in years. He defined old age to be a

natural consumption which dries us up and wastes us away: on this principle, he deplored the ignorance of those who call wine old men's milk. He maintained that wine wears them out and corrodes them, and pleaded with all the force of eloquence against that liquor, fatal in common both to the young and old, that friend with a serpent in its bosom, that pleasure with a dagger under its girdle.

In spite of these fine arguments, at the end of a week, a looseness ensued, with some twinges, which I was blasphemous enough to saddle on the universal dissolvent, and the new-fashioned diet. I stated my symptoms to my master, in the hope he would relax the rigor of his regimen, and qualify my meals with a little wine, but his hostility to that liquor was inflexible. "If you have not philosophy enough," said he, "for pure water, there are innocent infusions to strengthen the stomach against the nausea of aqueous quaffings. Sage, for example, has a very pretty flavor: and if you wish to heighten it into a debauch, it is only mixing rosemary, wild poppy, and other simples, but no compounds."

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As it would have been ungenteel in me to have run riot on my entrance into the career of practice, I affected thorough conviction, indeed I thought there was something in it. I therefore went on drinking water on the authority of Celsus, or to speak in scientific terms, I began to drown the bile in copious drenches of that unadulterated liquor; and though I felt myself more out of order from day to day, prejudice won the cause against experience. It is evident, therefore, that I was in the right road to the practice of physic. Yet I could not always be insensible to the qualms which increased in my frame, to that degree, as to determine me on quitting Doctor Sangrado. But he invested me with a new office which changed my tone. "Hark you, my child," said he to me one day, "I am not one of those hard and ungrateful masters, who leave their household to grow gray in service without a suitable reward. I am well pleased

with you, I have a regard for you, and without waiting till you have served your time, I will make your fortune. Without more ado, I will initiate you in the healing art, of which I have for so many years been at the head. Other physicians make the science to consist of various unintelligible branches; but I will shorten the road for you, and dispense with the drudgery of studying natural philosophy, pharmacy, botany, and anatomy. Remember, my friend, that bleeding and drinking warm water are the two grand principles; the true secret of curing all the distempers incident to humanity. Yes, this marvelous secret which I reveal to you, and which nature, beyond the reach of my colleagues, has failed in rescuing from my pen, is comprehended in these two articles—namely, bleeding and drenching. Here you have the sum total of my philosophy; you are thoroughly bottomed in medicine, and may raise yourself to the summit of fame on the shoulders of my long experience. You may enter into partnership at once, by keeping the books in the morning, and going out to visit patients in the afternoon. While I dose the nobility and clergy, you shall labor in your vocation among the lower orders; and when you have felt your ground a little, I will get you admitted into our body. You are a philosopher, Gil Blas, though you have never graduated; the common herd of them, though they have graduated in due form and order, are likely to run out the length of their tether without knowing their right hand from their left."

I thanked the doctor for having so speedily enabled me to serve as his deputy; and, by way of acknowledging his goodness, promised to follow his system to the end of my career, with a magnanimous indifference about the aphorisms of Hippocrates. But that engagement was not to be taken to the letter. This tender attachment to water went against the grain, and I had a scheme for drinking wine every day snugly among the patients. I left off wearing my own suit, to take up one of my master's, and look like an inveterate practitioner. After which I brought my medical theories into play, leaving

them to look to the event whom it might concern. I began on an alguazil in a pleurisy; he was condemned to be bled with the utmost rigor of the law, at the same time that the system was to be replenished copiously with water. Next I made a lodgment in the veins of a gouty pastry-cook, who roared like a lion by reason of gouty spasms. I stood on no more ceremony with his blood than with that of the alguazil, and laid no restriction on his taste for simple liquids. My prescriptions brought me in twelve rials; an incident so auspicious in my professional career, that I only wished for the plagues of Egypt on all the hale subjects of Valladolid. As I was coming out of the pastry-cook's whom should I meet but Fabricio, a total stranger since the death of the Licentiate Sédillo! He looked at me with astonishment for some seconds; then set up a laugh with all his might, and held his sides. He had no reason to be grave, for I had a cloak trailing on the ground, with a doublet and breeches of four times my natural dimensions. I was certainly a complete original. I suffered him to make merry as long as he liked, and could scarcely help joining in the ridicule; but I kept a guard on my muscles to preserve a becoming dignity in public, and the better to enact the physician, whose part in society is not that of a buffoon. If the absurdity of my appearance excited Fabricio's merriment, my affected gravity added zest to it; and when he had nearly exhausted his lungs: "By all the powers, Gil Blas," quoth he, "thou art in complete masquerade. Who the devil has dressed you up in this manner?" "Fair and softly, my friend," replied I, "fair and softly, be a little on your good behavior with a modern Hippocrates. Understand me to be the substitute of Doctor Sangrado, the most eminent physician in Valladolid. I have lived with him these three weeks. He has bottomed me thoroughly in medicine; and, as he cannot perform the obsequies of all the patients who send for him, I visit a part of them to take the burden off his conscience. He does execution in great families, I among the vulgar." "Vastly well," replied Fab-

ricio; "that is to say, he grants you a lease on the blood of the commonalty, but keeps to himself the fee-simple of the fashionable world. I wish you joy of your lot; it is a pleasanter line of practice among the populace than among great folk. Long live a snug connection in the suburbs! a man's mistakes are easily buried, and his murders elude all but God's revenge. Yes, my brave boy, your destiny is truly enviable; in the language of Alexander, were I not Fabricio, I could wish to be Gil Blas."

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I was no sooner at home than Doctor Sangrado came in. I talked to him about the patients I had seen, and paid into his hands eight rials of the twelve I had received for my prescriptions. "Eight rials!" said he, as he counted them, "mighty little for two visits! But we must take things as we find them." In the spirit of taking things as he found them, he laid violent hands on six, giving me the other two. "Here, Gil Blas," continued he, "see what a foundation to build upon. I make over to you the fourth of all you may bring me. You will soon feather your nest, my friend; for, by the blessing of Providence, there will be a great deal of ill health this year."

I had reason to be content with my dividend; since, having determined to keep back the third part of what I received in my rounds, and afterwards touching another fourth of the remainder, half of the whole, if arithmetic is anything more than a deception, would become my perquisite. This inspired me with new zeal for my profession. The next day, as soon as I had dined, I resumed my medical paraphernalia, and took the field once more. I visited several patients on the list, and treated their several complaints in one invariable routine. Hitherto things went on under the rose, and no individual, thank heaven, had risen up in rebellion against my prescriptions. But let a physician's cures be as extraordinary as they will, some quack or other is always ready to rip up his reputation. I was called in to a

grocer's son in a dropsy. Whom should I find there before me but a little black-looking physician, by name Doctor Cuchillo, introduced by a relation of the family. I bowed round most profoundly, but dipped lowest to the personage whom I took to have been invited to a consultation with me. He returned my compliment with a distant air; then, having stared me in the face for a few seconds: "Signor Doctor," said he, "I beg pardon for being inquisitive, I thought I had been acquainted with all my brethren in Valladolid, but I confess your physiognomy is altogether new. You must have been settled but a short time in town." I avowed myself a young practitioner, acting as yet under the direction of Doctor Sangrado. "I wish you joy," replied he politely, "you are studying under a great man. You must doubtless have seen a vast deal of sound practice, young as you appear to be." He spoke this with so easy an assurance, that I was at a loss whether he meant it seriously, or was laughing at me. While I was conning over my reply, the grocer, seizing on the opportunity, said: "Gentlemen, I am persuaded of your both being perfectly competent in your art; have the goodness without ado to take the case in hand, and devise some effectual means for the restoration of my son's health."

Thereupon the little pulse-counter set himself about reviewing the patient's situation; and after having dilated to me on all the symptoms, asked me what I thought the fittest method of treatment. "I am of opinion," replied I, "that he should be bled once a day, and drink as much warm water as he can swallow." At these words, our diminutive doctor said to me with a malicious simper, "And so you think such a course will save the patient?" "Never doubt it," exclaimed I in a confident tone; "it must produce that effect, because it is a certain method of cure for all distempers. Ask Signor Sangrado." "At that rate," retorted he, "Celsus is altogether in the wrong; for he contends that the readiest way to cure a dropsical subject is to let him almost die of hunger and thirst." "Oh! as for Celsus," interrupted I, "he is

no oracle of mine, as fallible as the meanest of us; I often have occasion to bless myself for going contrary to his dogmas." "I discover by your language," said Cuchillo, "the safe and sure method of practice Doctor Sangrado instills into his pupils. Bleeding and drenching are the extent of his resources. No wonder so many worthy people are cut off under his direction." "No defamation!" interrupted I with some acrimony; "a member of the faculty had better not begin throwing stones. Come, come, my learned doctor, patients can get to the other world without bleeding and warm water; and I question whether the most deadly of us has ever signed more passports than yourself. If you have any crow to pluck with Signor Sangrado, write against him, he will answer you, and we shall soon see who will have the best of the battle." "By all the saints in the calendar!" swore he in a transport of passion, "you little know whom you are talking to. I have a tongue and a fist, my friend; and am not afraid of Sangrado, who, with all his arrogance and affectation, is but a ninny." The size of the little death-dealer made me hold his anger cheap. I gave him a sharp retort; he sent back as good as I brought, till at last we came to cuffs. We had pulled a few handfuls of hair from each other's heads before the grocer and his kinsman could part us. When they had brought this about, they feed me for my attendance, and retained my antagonist, whom they thought the more skillful of the two.

Another adventure succeeded close on the heels of this. I went to see an huge chanter in a fever. As soon as he heard me talk of warm water, he showed himself so averse to this specific, as to fall into a fit of swearing. He abused me in all possible shapes, and threatened to throw me out at window. I was in a greater hurry to get out of his house than to get in. I did not choose to see any more patients that day, and repaired to the inn where I had agreed to meet Fabricio. He was there first. As we found ourselves in a tippling humor, we drank hard, and returned to our employers in a pretty pickle,

that is to say, so-so in the upper story. Signor Sangrado was not aware of my being drunk, because he took the lively gestures which accompanied the relation of my quarrel with the little doctor, for an effect of the agitation not yet subsided after the battle. Besides, he came in for his share in my report; and feeling himself nettled by Cuchillo: "You have done well, Gil Blas," said he, "to defend the character of our practice against this little abortion of the faculty. So he takes upon him to set his face against watery drenches in dropsical cases? An ignorant fellow! I maintain, I do, in my own person, that the use of them may be reconciled to the best theories. Yes, water is a cure for all sorts of dropsies, just as it is good for rheumatism and the green sickness. It is excellent too in those fevers where the effect is at once to parch and to chill, and even miraculous in those disorders ascribed to cold, thin, phlegmatic, and pituitous humors. This opinion may appear strange to young practitioners like Cuchillo; but it is right orthodox in the best and soundest systems: so that if persons of that description were capable of taking a philosophical view, instead of crying me down, they would become my most zealous advocates."

In his rage, he never suspected me of drinking: for, to exasperate him still more against the little doctor, I had thrown into my recital some circumstances of my own addition. Yet, engrossed as he was by what I had told him, he could not help taking notice that I drank more water than usual that evening.

In fact, the wine had made me very thirsty. Any one but Sangrado would have distrusted my being so very dry, as to swallow down glass after glass: but as for him, he took it for granted, in the simplicity of his heart, that I began to acquire a relish for aqueous potations. "Apparently, Gil Blas," said he with a gracious smile, "you have no longer such a dislike to water. As heaven is my judge! you quaff it off like nectar. It is no wonder, my friend, I was certain you would take a liking to that liquor." "Sir," replied I, "there is a tide in the affairs

of men: with my present lights, I would give all the wine in Valladolid for a pint of water." This answer delighted the doctor, who would not lose so fine an opportunity of expatiating on the excellence of water. He undertook to ring the changes once more in its praise, not like an hireling pleader, but as an enthusiast in the cause. "A thousand times," exclaimed he, "a thousand and a thousand times of greater value, as being more innocent than our modern taverns, were those baths of ages past, whither the people went not shamefully to squander their fortunes and expose their lives, by swilling themselves with wine, but assembled there for the decent and economical amusement of drinking warm water. It is difficult enough to admire the patriotic forecast of those ancient politicians, who established places of public resort, where water was dealt out gratis to all comers, and who confined wine to the shops of the apothecaries, that its use might be prohibited but under the direction of physicians. What a stroke of wisdom! It is doubtless to preserve the seeds of that antique frugality, emblematic of the golden age, that persons are found to this day, like you and me, who drink nothing but water, and are persuaded they possess a prevention or a cure for every ailment, provided our warm water has never boiled; for I have observed that water, when it has boiled, is heavier, and sits less easily on the stomach."

While he was holding forth thus eloquently, I was in danger more than once of splitting my sides with laughing. But I contrived to keep my countenance: nay, more; to chime in with the doctor's theory. I found fault with the use of wine, and pitied mankind for having contracted an untoward relish to so pernicious a beverage. Then, finding my thirst not sufficiently allayed, I filled a large goblet with water, and after having swilled it like a horse: "Come, sir," said I to my master, "let us drink plentifully of this beneficial liquor. Let us make those early establishments of dilution you so much regret, to live again in your house." He clapped his hands in ecstasy at these words, and preached to me for a whole

hour about suffering no liquid but water to pass my lips. To confirm the habit, I promised to drink a large quantity every evening; and, to keep my word with less violence to my private inclinations, I went to bed with a determined purpose of going to the tavern every day.

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Far from wanting employment, it happened by a kind providence, as my master had foretold, to be a very sickly season. The smallpox and a malignant fever took alternate possession of the town and the suburbs. All the physicians in Valladolid had their share of business, and we not the least. We saw eight or ten patients a day; so that the kettle was kept on the simmer, and the blood in the action of transpiring. But things will happen cross; they died to a man, either by our fault or their own. If their case was hopeless, we were not to blame; and if it was not hopeless, they were. Three visits to a patient was the length of our tether. Abqut the second, we sometimes ran foul of the undertaker; or when we had been more fortunate than usual, the patient had got no further than the point of death. As I was but a young physician, not yet hardened to the trade of an assassin, I grieved over the melancholy issue of my own theory and practice. "Sir," said I, one evening to Doctor Sangrado, "I call heaven to witness on the spot that I have never strayed from your infallible method; and yet I have never saved a patient: one would think they died out of spite, and were on the other side of the great medical question. This very day I came across two of them, going into the country to be buried." "My good lad," replied he, "my experience nearly comes to the same point. It is but seldom I have the pleasure of curing my kind and partial friends. If I had less confidence in my principles, I should think my prescriptions had set their faces against the work they were intended to perform." "If you will take a hint, sir," replied I, "we had better vary our system. Let us give, by way of experiment, chemical preparations to our patients; the worst they can do is to tread in the steps of our pure dilutions and our

phlebotomizing evacuations." "I would willingly give it a trial," rejoined he, "if it were a matter of indifference, but I have published on the practice of bleeding and the use of drenches; would you have me cut the throat of my own fame as an author!" "Oh! you are in the right," resumed I; "our enemies must not gain this triumph over us; they would say that you were out of conceit with your own systems, and would ruin your reputation for consistency. Perish the people, perish rather our nobility and clergy! But let us go on in the old path. After all, our brethren of the faculty, with all their tenderness about bleeding, have no patent for longevity; and we may set off their drugs against our specifics."

We went on working double tides, and did so much execution, that in less than six weeks we made as many widows and orphans as the siege of Troy. The plague must have got into Valladolid by the number of funerals. Day after day came some father or other to know what was become of his son, who was last seen in our hands; or else a stupid fellow of an uncle, who had a foolish hankering after a deceased nephew. With respect to the nephews and sons, on whose uncles and fathers we had equalized our system of destruction, they thought that least said was soonest mended. Husbands were altogether on their good behavior, they would not split a hair about the loss of a wife or two. The real sufferers to whose reproaches we were exposed, were sometimes quite savage in their grief; without being mealy-mouthed in their expressions, they called us blockheads and assassins. I was concerned at their bad language; but my master, who was up to every circumstance, listened to their abuse with the utmost indifference. Yet I might have grown as callous as himself to popular reproach, if heaven, interposing its shield between the invalids of Valladolid, and one of their scourges, had not providentially raised up an incident to disgust me with medicine, which from the outset had been disgusted with me.

The idle fellows about town assembled every day in our neighborhood for a game at tennis. Among the num-

ber was one of those professed bullies who set up for great Dons, and are the complete cocks of the tennis-court. He was a Biscayan, and assumed the title of Don Roderic de Mondragon. His age might be about thirty. His size was somewhat above the common, but he was lean and bony. Besides two sparkling little eyes rolling about in his head, and throwing out defiance against all by-standers, a very broad nose came in between a pair of red whiskers, which turned up like a hook as high as the temples. His phraseology was so rough and uncouth that the very sound of his voice would throw a quiet man into an ague. This tyrant over both the rackets and the game was lord paramount in all disputes between the players; and there was no appeal from his decisions, but at the risk of receiving a challenge the next day. Precisely as I have drawn Signor Don Roderic, whom the Don in the foreground of his titles could never make a gentleman, Signor Don Roderic was sweet upon the mistress of the tennis-court. She was a woman of forty, in good circumstances, as charming as forty can well be, just entering on the second year of her widowhood. I know not how he made himself agreeable; certainly not by his exterior recommendations, but probably by that within which passeth show. However that might be, she took a fancy to him, and began to turn her thoughts towards the holy state of matrimony; but while that great event was in agitation, for the punishment of her sins she was taken with a malignant fever, and with me for a physician. Had the disorder been ever so slight, my practice would have made a serious job of it. At the expiration of four days there was not a dry eye in the tennis-court. The mistress joined the outward bound colony of my patients, and her family administered to her effects. Don Roderic, distracted at the loss of his mistress, or rather disappointed of a good establishment, was not satisfied with fretting and fuming at me, but swore he would run me through the body, or even frown me into a non-entity. A good-natured neighbor apprised me of this vow, with a caution to keep at home, for fear

of coming across this devil of a fellow. This warning, though taken in good part, was a source of anxiety and apprehension. I was eternally fancying the enraged Biscayan laying siege to the outworks of my citadel. There was no getting a moment's respite from alarm. This circumstance weaned me from the practice of medicine, and I thought of nothing but deliverance from my horrors. On went my embroidered suit once more. Taking leave of my master, who did all he could to detain me, I got out of town with the dawn, not heedless of that terrible Don Roderic, who might waylay me on the road.

With one other scene from his life we must close our acquaintance with Gil Blas. He is now the favorite of an archbishop:

I had been after dinner to get together my baggage, and take my horse from the inn where I had put up, and afterwards returned to supper at the archbishop's palace, where a neatly furnished room was got ready for me, and such a bed as was more likely to pamper than to mortify the flesh. The day following, his grace sent for me quite as soon as I was ready to go to him. It was to give me a homily to transcribe. He made a point of having it copied with all possible accuracy. It was done to please him; for I omitted neither accent, nor comma, nor the minutest tittle of all he had marked down. His satisfaction at observing this was heightened by its being unexpected. "Eternal father!" exclaimed he in a holy rapture, when he had glanced his eye over all the folios of my copy, "was ever anything seen so correct? You are too good a transcriber not to have some little smattering of the grammarian. Now tell me with the freedom of a friend: in writing it over, have you been struck with nothing that grated upon your feelings? Some little careless idiom, or some word used in an improper sense?" "Oh! may it please your grace," answered I with a modest air, "it is not for me, with my confined education and coarse taste, to aim at making critical remarks. And though ever so well qualified, I am satisfied that

your grace's works would come out pure from the essay." The successor of the apostles smiled at my answer. He made no observation on it; but it was easy to see through all his piety, that he was an arrant author at the bottom: there is something in that dye, that not heaven itself can wash out.

I seemed to have purchased the fee-simple of his good graces by my flattery. Day after day did I get a step further in his esteem; and Don Ferdinand, who came to see him very often, told me my footing was so firm, that there could not be a doubt but my fortune was made. Of this my master himself gave me a proof some little time afterwards: and the occasion was as follows:—One evening in his closet he rehearsed before me, with appropriate emphasis and action, a homily which he was to deliver the next day in the cathedral. He did not content himself with asking me what I thought of it in the gross, but insisted on my telling him what passages struck me most. I had the good fortune to pick out those which were nearest to his own taste, his favorite common-places. Thus, as luck would have it, I passed in his estimation for a man who had a quick and natural relish of the real and less obvious beauties in a work. "This, indeed," exclaimed he, "is what you may call having discernment and feeling in perfection! Well, well, my friend! it cannot be said of you, *'Baeotum in crasso jujares aëre matum'* (You would have sworn he was born in the deadening atmosphere of Boeotia)." In a word, he was so highly pleased with me, as to add in a tone of extraordinary emotion: "Never mind, Gil Blas, henceforward take no care about hereafter: I shall make it my business to place you among the favored children of my bounty. You have my best wishes; and to prove to you that you have them, I shall take you into my inmost confidence."

These words were no sooner out of his mouth, than I fell at his grace's feet, quite overwhelmed with gratitude. I embraced his elliptical legs with almost pagan idolatry, and considered myself as a man on the high road to a very

handsome fortune. "Yes, my child," resumed the archbishop, whose speech had been cut short by the rapidity of my prostration, "I mean to make you the receiver-general of all my inmost ruminations. Hearken attentively to what I am going to say. I have a great pleasure in preaching. The Lord sheds a blessing on my homilies; they sink deep into the hearts of sinners; set up a glass in which vice sees its own image, and bring back many from the paths of error into the high road of repentance. What a heavenly sight, when a miser, scared at the hideous picture drawn by my eloquence of his avarice, opens his coffers to the poor and needy, and dispenses the accumulated store with a liberal hand! The voluptuary, too, is snatched from the pleasures of the table; ambition flies at my command to the wholesome discipline of the monastic cell; while female frailty, tottering on the brink of ruin, with one ear open to the siren voice of the seducer, and the other to my saintly correctives, is restored to domestic happiness and the approving smile of heaven, by the timely warnings of the pulpit. These miraculous conversions which happen almost every Sunday, ought of themselves to goad me on in the career of saving souls. Nevertheless, to conceal no part of my weakness from my monitor, there is another reward on which my heart is intent, a reward which the seraphic scrupulousness of my virtue to little purpose condemns as too carnal; a literary reputation for a sublime and elegant style. The honor of being handed down to posterity as a perfect pulpit orator has its irresistible attractions. My compositions are generally thought to be equally powerful and persuasive; but I could wish of all things to steer clear of the rock on which good authors split, who are too long before the public, and to retire from professional life with my reputation in undiminished luster.

"To this end, my dear Gil Blas," continued the prelate, "there is one thing requisite from your zeal and friendship. Whenever it shall strike you that my pen begins to contract, as it were, the ossification of old age, whenever you see my genius in its climacteric, do not

fail to give me a hint. There is no trusting to oneself in such a case; pride and conceit were the original sin of man. The probe of criticism must be intrusted to an impartial stander-by, of fine talents and unshaken probity. Both those requisites center in you: you are my choice, and I give myself up to your direction." "Heaven be praised, my lord," said I, "there is no need to trouble yourself with any such thoughts yet. Besides, an understanding of your grace's mold and caliber will last out double the time of a common genius; or to speak with more certainty and truth, it will never be the worse for wear, if you live to the age of Methusalem. I consider you as a second Cardinal Ximenes, whose powers, superior to decay, instead of flagging with years, seemed to derive new vigor from their approximation with the heavenly regions." "No flattery, my friend!" interrupted he. "I know myself to be in danger of failing all at once. At my age one begins to be sensible of infirmities, and those of the body communicate with the mind. I repeat it to you, Gil Blas, as soon as you shall be of opinion that my head is not so clear as usual, give me warning of it instantly. Do not be afraid of offending by frankness and sincerity. To put me in mind of my own frailty will be the strongest proof of your affection for me. Besides, your very interest is concerned in it, for if it should, by any spite of chance towards you, come to my ears that the people say in town, 'His grace's sermons produce no longer their accustomed impression, it is time for him to abandon his pulpit to younger candidates,' I do assure you most seriously and solemnly, you will lose not only my friendship, but the provision for life that I have promised you. Such will be the result of your silly tampering with truth."

Here my patron left off to wait for my answer, which was an echo of his speech, and a promise of obeying him in all things. From that moment there were no secrets from me; I became the prime favorite. All the household, except Melchior de la Ronda, looked at me with an eye of envy. It was curious to observe the manner in

which the whole establishment, from the highest to the lowest, thought it necessary to demean themselves towards his grace's confidential secretary; there was no meanness to which they would not stoop to curry favor with me; I could scarcely believe they were Spaniards. I left no stone unturned to be of service to them, without being taken in by their interested assiduities. My lord archbishop, at my entreaty, took them by the hand. He got a company for one, and fitted him out so as to make a handsome figure in the army. Another he sent to Mexico, with a considerable appointment which he procured him; and I obtained a good slice of his bounty for my friend Melchior. It was evident from these facts, that if the prelate was not particularly active in good works, at least he rarely gave a churlish refusal, when any one had the courage to importune him for his benevolence.

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Two months after this, in the luxuriant harvest of my highest favor, a lowering storm came suddenly over the episcopal palace; the archbishop had a stroke of apoplexy. By dint of immediate applications and good nursing, in a few days there was no bodily appearance of disease remaining. But his reverend intellects did not so easily recover from their lethargy. I could not help observing it to myself in the very first discourse that he composed. Yet there was not such a wide gap between the merits of the present and the former ones, as to warrant the inference that the sun of oratory was many degrees advanced in its post-meridian course. A second homily was worth waiting for; because that would clearly determine the line of my conduct. Alas, and well-a-day! when that second homily came, it was a knock-down argument. Sometimes the good prelate moved forward, and sometimes he moved backwards; sometimes he mounted up into the garret; and sometimes dipped down into the cellar. It was a composition of more sound than meaning, something like a superannuated schoolmaster's theme, when he attempts to give his boys more sense than he possesses of his own, or like a capuchin's sermon,

which only scatters a few artificial flowers of paltry rhetoric over a barren desert of doctrine.

I was not the only person whom the alteration struck. The audience at large, when he delivered it, as if they too had been pledged to watch the advances of dotage, said to one another in a whisper all round the church, "Here is a sermon, with symptoms of apoplexy in every paragraph." "Come, my good Coryphaeus of the public taste in homilies," said I then to myself, "prepare to do your office. You see that my lord archbishop is going very fast—you ought to warn him of it, not only as his bosom friend, on whose sincerity he relies, but lest some blunt fellow should anticipate you, and bolt out the truth in an offensive manner. In that case you know the consequence; you would be struck out of his will, where no doubt you have a more convertible bequest than the Licentiate Sédillo's library."

But as reason, like Janus, looks at things with two faces, I began to consider the other side of the question; the hint seemed difficult to wrap up so as to make it palatable. Authors in general are stark mad on the subject of their own works, and such an author might be more testy than the common herd of the irritable race: but that suspicion seemed illiberal on my part, for it was impossible that my freedom should be taken amiss, when it had been forced upon me by so positive an injunction. Add to this, that I reckoned upon handling the subject skillfully, and cramming discretion down his throat like a high-seasoned epicurean dish. After all my pro and con, finding that I risked more by keeping silence than by breaking it, I determined to venture on the delicate duty of speaking my mind.

Now there was but one difficulty; a difficulty indeed! how to open the business. Luckily the orator himself extricated me from that embarrassment, by asking what they said of him in the world at large, and whether people were tolerably well pleased with his last discourse. I answered that there could be but one opinion about his homilies; but that it should seem as if the last had not

quite struck home to the hearts of the audience, like those which had gone before. "Do you really mean what you say, my friend?" replied he, with a sort of wriggling surprise. "Then my congregation are more in the temper of Aristarchus than of Longinus!" "No, may it please your grace," rejoined I, "quite the contrary. Performances of that order are above the reach of vulgar criticism: there is not a soul but expects to be saved by their influence. Nevertheless, since you have made it my duty to be sincere and unreserved, I shall take the liberty of just stating that your last discourse is not written with quite the overpowering eloquence and conclusive argument of your former ones."

This ignorant and stupid frankness of mine completely blanched my master's cheek; but he forced a fretful smile, and said, "Then, good Master Gil Blas, that piece does not exactly hit your fancy?" "I did not mean to say that, your grace," interrupted I, looking very foolish. "It is very far superior to what any one else could produce, though a little below par with respect to your own works in general." "I know what you mean," replied he. "You think I am going down hill, do not you? Out with it at once. It is your opinion that it is time for me to think of retiring?" "I should never have had the presumption," said I, "to deliver myself with so little reserve, if it had not been your grace's express command. I act in entire obedience to your grace's orders; and I most obsequiously implore your grace not to take offense at my boldness." "I were unfit to live in a Christian land!" interrupted he, with stammering impatience; "I were unfit to live in a Christian land if I liked you the less for such a Christian virtue as sincerity. A man who does not love sincerity sets his face against the distinguishing mark between a friend and a flatterer. I should have given you infinite credit for speaking what you thought, if you had thought anything that deserved to be spoken. I have been finely taken in by your outside show of cleverness, without any solid foundation of sober judgment!"

Though completely unhorsed, and at the enemy's mercy, I wanted to make terms of decent capitulation, and to go unmolested into winter quarters: but let those who think to appease an exasperated author, and especially an author whose ear has been long attuned to the music of his own praises, take warning by my fate. "Let us talk no more on the subject, my very young friend," said he. "You are as yet scarcely in the rudiments of good taste, and utterly incompetent to distinguish between gold and tinsel. You are yet to learn that I never in all my life composed a finer homily, than that unfortunate one which had not the honor of your approbation. The immortal part of me, by the blessing of heaven on me and my congregation, is less weighed down by human infirmity than when the flesh was stronger. We all grow wiser as we grow older, and I shall in future select the people about me with more caution; nor submit the castigation of my works but to a much abler critic than yourself. Get about your business!" pursued he, giving me an angry shove by the shoulders out of his closet; "go and tell my treasurer to pay you a hundred ducats, and take my priestly blessing in addition to that sum. God speed you, good Master Gil Blas! I heartily pray that you may do well in the world! There is nothing to stand in your way, but the want of a little better taste."

IV. Marivaux. The novels of Marivaux are delicately drawn and are of a feminine spirit; as Voltaire expressed it, he weighed "nothings in scales of gossamer." Nowhere does he concern himself with general ideas, but confines his labors to drawing little pictures with minute detail, so perfect and exquisite in workmanship that literary critics regard him with extreme favor, although his work has never attained popularity outside of France.

Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux

was born in 1688, and lived a comparatively uneventful career in a small but rather select coterie of friends. His first drama was published at the age of eighteen, and that with the works of similar character which followed secured him admission to the Academy in 1742. His title to distinction is no more the result of his excellent and popular plays than it is of his novels, which, though they contain an abundance of incident, are really novels of character. The novels are little read to-day, but several of his plays are yet annually presented in the Parisian theaters. Among his plays some of the best are *Les Surprises de l'Amour, Le Legs, Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard* and *Les Fausses Confidences.* From his time the novel ceased to be primarily a romance full of adventures, with a study of manners, and became rather an analysis of character and passions, with the incidents subordinate.

The two novels which helped to establish the new criterion of excellence are the *Vie de Marianne* and the *Paysan Parvenu* (*The Successful Peasant*). Marianne, the heroine of the first novel, when only two or three years of age, is traveling in a coach with people who are afterwards supposed to be her parents, when it is attacked by robbers and every one excepting the infant is murdered. A curate of a neighboring village takes the little girl under his charge, and brings her up with much care and affection until she is sixteen. The

curate's sister at this time is called to Paris by the death of a relative, and she takes Marianne with her, in order to secure suitable employment for the girl, but during their stay the sister is taken suddenly ill and dies in a very short time. The curate has lost his mind, and his funds have been exhausted by the expenses of his sister's illness, so that Marianne can not think of returning to him, and is compelled to accept the only opportunity offered her, that of a home in the house of M. de Climal, to whose care she had been recommended and on whose benevolence the priest placed implicit confidence. Marianne is placed with Madame Dutour, who keeps a linen shop, and while the girl is at this place the hypocrisy of her new guardian gradually develops.

Returning one day from mass, she sprains her foot, and, being unable to walk, is carried to the neighboring house of M. de Climal's young nephew, M. Valville, and a mutual passion develops quickly. Unfortunately, M. de Climal accidentally enters the room one day, and finding his nephew on his knees before Marianne, takes her back and determines to press his suit. Marianne's indignation is increased, and she rejects him decidedly. A few days later M. Valville, who has discovered her residence, enters and finds his uncle kneeling before Marianne. Despairing now of gaining her affection, M. de Climal declines to support her any further, and she goes to the priest who had befriended her on her friend's death,

but finds the hypocrite before her with the priest. Then Marianne applies to the prioress of a convent, where she meets a friend in a beneficent lady, who is known as Madame Miran, and the latter finds a place for the girl in the convent. One day in course of conversation Madame Miran mentions to her charge that her son, M. Valville, has lately refused an advantageous marriage because of a young girl who was injured in front of his house and carried there helpless. Marianne attempts no concealment, and admits that she returns the love of M. Valville, but assures her protectress that she will do anything she can to detach him from her affection. M. Valville, however, will listen to no such arrangement, and his mother finally agrees to his marriage with Marianne, and in order to prevent gossip, it is decided that no mention shall be made of the circumstances of the girl's infancy. Madame Dutour, however, discloses the secret, and the relatives of Valville object strenuously to the marriage. In time these objections are all removed, and Marianne is looking forward to a happy union with her lover when he falls violently in love with another woman, and the novel terminates abruptly in the midst of a story told to Marianne by a nun, who wishes to console her with the idea that others are even more unfortunate than herself.

That the novel remains unfinished is unfortunate, and there are defects which critics may easily find, but on the whole the merits far ex-

ceed the faults, and the tale has been deservedly popular.

The *Paysan Parvenu* is inferior in many of its features, its incidents are few, and its chief merit lies in the careful delineation of delicate shades of feeling in the characters. Like the *Life of Marianne,* it was left unfinished.

V. Abbe Prevost. While the Abbe Prévost produced a large volume of varied literature and achieved distinction in the drama and as a translator of English novels, his own best writing was in fiction, and he is remembered chiefly because of his beautiful and powerful novel, *Manon Lescaut.*

Antoine François Prévost d'Exiles twice entered the Jesuit order, and twice abandoned it for a military life. Then, tired of dissipation, he became a Benedictine monk, but scarcely had he taken the irrevocable vows than he became weary of the restraints of his order and fled to England, where some of his earliest works were written. Through the influence of the Prince of Conti he was permitted to return to France, and became the secretary of his patron. Here he devoted much of his time to writing, and finally, becoming too free in his criticisms of the government and religion of his country, he was banished, only to be permitted again to return to France and continue his fertile literary career. It was during this time that he wrote history and translated a number of Richardson's novels, besides producing a great deal of original work.

Manon Lescaut, which appeared first in 1731, is a tale of an absorbing passion between a swindler and his mistress. The man himself, brilliant and possessing some excellent qualities, was so absorbed by his irresistible love that he violated almost every rule of life and finally became a wretched wanderer, dead to all the advantages of his position, but following everywhere his worthless love.

While at college he eloped with Manon Lescaut, who, unable to endure the poverty into which they were plunged, maintained herself and her lover by immoral and disgraceful expedients. However, through all she preserved her affection for him, but dragged him down to her own level, so that he assisted her by cheating at the gaming table which she supported among her admirers. Vile as the two are, the author palliates their conduct by referring continually to the matchless beauty and cleverness of Manon and throws about her a charm which endures even in the most abject conditions of vice and misery. Finally their frauds were detected and friends of the man endeavored to rescue him from his unworthy attachment by sending her as a convict to New Orleans, but he followed and found her, and the two lived in edifying constancy until he, having incurred the displeasure of the governor, was driven into the wilderness, where she followed and died of grief and fatigue. Morality, probability and good taste are all offended in this novel, but no reader lays it

down without some portion of admiration for the beautiful Manon and some interest in the passion and devotion of the young man. These are the very facts which justify some critics in objecting to the immoral tendency of the work.

VI. SAINT-PIERRE. While not considered as a great novelist, but with a distinction and renown quite his own in other fields during his life, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre contributed to literature one thoroughly charming romance, which connects the work of the eighteenth century with the romantic novels that characterize the modern school. Bernardin was a dreamer and a visionary, an angry opponent of established society, and he lived a fantastic life, the slave of his imagination. He was born at Havre in 1737, and considered himself to be descended from the Eustache de Saint-Pierre, who offered himself as a victim to save Calais from the wrath of Edward III, but who was saved, it is said, by the intercession of Queen Philippa.

Bernardin was an odd child, who loved nature from infancy. At eight he was absorbed in the cultivation of his little garden, and it is said that at one time when he was taken to Rouen his father pointed to the tall spires of the cathedral. "Mon Dieu, how high they fly," said the child. When every one laughed, it was discovered that Bernardin had been looking only at the swallows which circled around the lofty spires. At twelve his little soul was wholly

absorbed by Robinson Crusoe and his island, and the influence of that book upon Bernardin's career and upon his writings is plainly noticeable. His love for adventure suggested to his parents that he be sent to sea, but the boy objected so strongly to discipline that he left the ship and afterward was placed at school with the Jesuits, where he made great progress.

It was the dream of his life, however, to seek an undiscovered island in mid-ocean, where he would found a colony whose members should be peaceable, virtuous and free, the real children of nature. Wherever he went he urged his extravagant plans upon persons of influence, and wearied them with his dreams. He went to Russia and was sent to Finland as an officer of the Queen; he went to Poland and fell in love with the Princess Mary; when she left him for a time he went to Vienna, but was soon back in Poland, where he found that his Princess had lost her love for him. Alluding to this last disappointment, he says in one of his letters:

> Adieu! friends dearer than the treasures of India! Adieu! forests of the North, that I shall never see again! —tender friendship, and the still dearer sentiment which surpassed it!—days of intoxication and of happiness, adieu! adieu! We live but for a day, to die during a whole life!

In 1766 he returned to Havre, where he found himself without employment and almost destitute. An appointment to the island of

Madagascar brought him only disappointment, and a commission as engineer to the Isle of France failed to satisfy him or his employers, but gave him an opportunity to dream away the days while he made notes on the natural history of the island and gathered the material for his masterpiece.

Saint-Pierre was a neurasthenic, and for a time in a condition bordering on insanity. Always melancholy and introspective, he worried over his disappointments continually, although his descriptions of his woes appear sometimes too eloquent to be quite real, as, for instance, in the following:

> I was struck with an extraordinary malady. Streams of fire, like lightning, flashed before my eyes: every object appeared to me double or in motion: like Oedipus, I saw two suns. . . . In the finest day of summer, I could not cross the Seine in a boat without experiencing intolerable anxiety. If, in a public garden, I merely passed by a piece of water, I suffered from spasms and a feeling of horror. I could not cross a garden in which many people were collected: if they looked at me, I immediately imagined they were speaking ill of me.

In spite of his mental maladies, however, he worked laboriously on his *Studies of Nature,* which reached three volumes in length. The tale *Paul and Virginia* brought him fame, and at fifty-five he married and had two children, a boy and a girl. On the death of his wife, he married a second time and lived until 1814, and although his death was little noticed in those stirring times, the French Academy did not fail to accord him the honors due his genius.

He early acquired the habit of confiding his woes to the public, and sympathy seemed but to increase his self-pity. "I experienced more pain from a single thorn than pleasure from a thousand roses," he says; and again, "The best society seems to me bad if I find in it one troublesome, wicked, slanderous, envious or perfidious person." However, he was a man of extremely tender feelings, who sought retirement and indulged in solitude, where he contemplated the hidden motives of action and indulged his ardent love for nature. Of the latter characteristic his writings are full of evidence. "With the first violet I shall come to see you," he wrote a friend; and again, "It is only with the light of heaven over me that I can recover my strength; obtain for me a rabbit's hole in which I can pass the summer in the country." In another place he writes:

> I should ever prefer my own country to every other, not because it was more beautiful, but because I was brought up in it. Happy he who sees again the places where all was loved and all was lovely!—the meadows in which he played, and the orchard that he robbed!

Perhaps the strongest characteristic of Saint-Pierre's work is not his devotion to nature but his ability to show its richness and energy by an admirable descriptive power, in which respect he was a leader in the great world of literature. His *Paul and Virginia* is the best expression of this spirit.

VII. "Paul and Virginia." When in 1784 Saint-Pierre published his three-volume

Studies of Nature, he did not include *Paul and Virginia,* because it had met with so unfavorable a reception from those to whom he had read it. It is said that many of his audience yawned and slept, that Buffon, the naturalist, called for his carriage and left the room, but it is recorded that the ladies wept at the tragic end of the idyl. However, in 1788, in a fourth volume of the *Studies,* he included the beautiful tale of the tropics, and it sprang at once to the height of popularity, for he had been fortunate in the choice of a subject and had treated it in so charming a manner that every reader was delighted. Translations into foreign tongues multiplied, and to-day *Paul and Virginia* is ranked in the same category as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* works, perhaps, not of supreme literary merit, but which have had a world reputation.

The scene of the tale is laid in Mauritius, where Madame de la Tour, who has married beneath her, is left a widow by the death of her young husband. Margaret, a girl of the middle classes, has fallen before the persuasions of a noble, and has fled to the same island to escape her disgrace. With two colored servants, these women take a small tract of land, build two small houses upon it, and there raise in idyllic purity and innocence their two children, Paul, the illegitimate son of Margaret, and Virginia, the daughter of Madame de la Tour, whom her wealthy and titled relatives have cast aside:

Rarely, indeed, had such an attachment been seen as that which the two children already testified for each other. If Paul complained of anything, his mother pointed to Virginia; at her sight he smiled, and was appeased. If any accident befell Virginia, the cries of Paul gave notice of the disaster; but the dear little creature would suppress her complaints if she found that he was unhappy. When I came hither, I usually found them quite naked, as is the custom of the country, tottering in their walk, and holding each other by the hands and under the arms, as we see represented the constellations of The Twins. At night these infants often refused to be separated, and were found lying in the same cradle, their cheeks, their bosoms pressed close together, their hands thrown round each other's neck, and sleeping, locked in one another's arms.

When they began to speak, the first names they learned to give each other were those of brother and sister, and childhood knows no softer appellation. Their education, by directing them ever to consider each other's wants, tended greatly to increase their affection. In a short time, all the household economy, the care of preparing their rural repasts became the task of Virginia, whose labors were always crowned with the praises and kisses of her brother. As for Paul, always in motion, he dug the garden with Domingo, or followed him with a little hatchet into the woods; and if, in his rambles, he espied a beautiful flower, any delicious fruit, or a nest of birds, even at the top of a tree, he would climb up and bring the spoil to his sister. When you met one of these children, you might be sure the other was not far off.

One day, as I was coming down that mountain, I saw Virginia at the end of the garden, running towards the house with her petticoat thrown over her head in order to screen herself from a shower of rain. At a distance, I thought she was alone; but as I hastened towards her in order to help her on, I perceived that she held Paul by the arm, almost entirely enveloped in the same canopy, and both were laughing heartily at their being sheltered

together under an umbrella of their own invention. These two charming faces, in the middle of the swelling petticoat, recalled to my mind the children of Leda, enclosed in the same shell.

Their sole study was how they could please and assist one another; for of all other things they were ignorant, and indeed could neither read nor write. They were never disturbed by inquiries about past times, nor did their curiosity extend beyond the bounds of their mountain. They believed the world ended at the shores of their own island, and all their ideas and all their affections were confined within its limits. Their mutual tenderness, and that of their mothers, employed all the energies of their minds. Their tears had never been called forth by tedious application to useless sciences. Their minds had never been wearied by lessons of morality, superfluous to bosoms unconscious of ill. They had never been taught not to steal, because everything with them was in common; or not to be intemperate, because their simple food was left to their own discretion; or not to lie, because they had nothing to conceal. Their young imaginations had never been terrified by the idea that God has punishments in store for ungrateful children, since, with them, filial affection arose naturally from maternal tenderness. All they had been taught of religion was to love it; and if they did not offer up long prayers in the church, wherever they were—in the house, in the fields, in the woods,—they raised towards heaven their innocent hands, and hearts purified by virtuous affections.

The background of nature, against which the tale is thrown and which constitutes so large a portion of the book, is well illustrated in the following passage:

But perhaps the most delightful spot of this enclosure was that called Virginia's Resting-place. At the foot of the rock which bore the name of The Discovery of

Friendship is a small crevice, whence issues a fountain, forming, near its source, a little spot of marshy soil in the middle of a field of rich grass. At the time of Paul's birth I had made Margaret a present of an Indian cocoa which had been given me, and which she planted on the border of this fenny ground, in order that the tree might one day serve to mark the epoch of her son's birth. Madame de la Tour planted another cocoa, with the same view, at the birth of Virginia. These nuts produced two cocoa-trees, which formed the only records of the two families: one was called Paul's tree, the other, Virginia's. Their growth was in the same proportion as that of the two young persons, not exactly equal; but they rose, at the end of twelve years, above the roofs of the cottages. Already their tender stalks were interwoven, and clusters of young cocoas hung from them over the basin of the fountain. With the exception of these two trees, this nook of the rock was left as it had been decorated by nature. On its embrowned and moist sides broad plants of maiden-hair glistened with their green and dark stars; and tufts of wave-leaved hart's tongue, suspended like long ribands of purpled green, floated on the wind. Near this grew a chain of the Madagascar periwinkle, the flowers of which resembled the red gillyflower; and the long-podded capsicum, the seed-vessels of which are of the color of blood, and more resplendent than coral. Near them, the herb balm, with its heart-shaped leaves, and the sweet basil, which has the odor of the clove, exhaled the most delicious perfumes. From the precipitous side of the mountain hung the graceful lianas, like floating draperies, forming magnificent canopies of verdure on the face of the rocks. The sea-birds, allured by the stillness of these retreats, resorted here to pass the night. At the hour of sunset we could perceive the curlew and the stint skimming along the sea-shore; the frigate-bird poised high in air; and the white bird of the tropic, which abandons, with the star of day, the solitudes of the Indian Ocean. Virginia took pleasure in resting herself upon the border of

this fountain, decorated with wild and sublime magnificence. She often went thither to wash the linen of the family beneath the shade of the two cocoa-trees, and thither too she sometimes led her goats to graze. While she was making cheeses of their milk, she loved to see them browse on the maiden-hair fern which clothed the steep sides of the rock, and hung suspended by one of its cornices, as on a pedestal. Paul, observing that Virginia was fond of this spot, brought thither, from the neighboring forest, a great variety of birds' nests. The old birds, following their young, soon established themselves in this new colony. Virginia, at stated times, distributed amongst them grains of rice, millet, and maize. As soon as she appeared, the whistling blackbird, the amadavid bird, whose note is so soft, the cardinal, with its flame-colored plumage, forsook their bushes; the parroquet, green as an emerald, descended from the neighboring fan-palms; the partridge ran along the grass: all advanced promiscuously towards her, like a brood of chickens: and she and Paul found an exhaustless source of amusement in observing their sports, their repasts, and their loves.

The following indicates how entirely the children of nature are the two young people:

You Europeans, whose minds are imbued from infancy with prejudices at variance with happiness, cannot imagine all the instruction and pleasure to be derived from nature. Your souls, confined to a small sphere of intelligence, soon reach the limit of its artificial enjoyments; but nature and the heart are inexhaustible. Paul and Virginia had neither clock, nor almanack, nor books of chronology, history, or philosophy. The periods of their lives were regulated by those of the operations of nature, and their familiar conversation had a constant reference to the changes of the seasons. They knew the time of day by the shadows of the trees; the seasons, by the times when those trees bore flowers or fruit; and the years, by the number of their harvests. These sooth-

ing images diffused an inexpressible charm over their conversation. "It is time to dine," said Virginia, "the shadows of the plantain-trees are at their roots;" or, "Night approaches; the tamarinds are closing their leaves." "When will you come and see us?" inquired some of her companions in the neighborhood. "At the time of the sugar-canes," answered Virginia. "Your visit will be then still more delightful," resumed her young acquaintances. When she was asked what was her own age, and that of Paul,—"My brother," said she, "is as old as the great cocoa-tree of the fountain; and I am as old as the little one: the mangoes have borne fruit twelve times, and the orange-trees have flowered four-and-twenty times, since I came into the world." Their lives seemed linked to that of the trees, like those of Fauns or Dryads. They knew no other historical epochs than those of the lives of their mothers, no other chronology than that of their orchards, and no other philosophy than that of doing good, and resigning themselves to the will of Heaven.

And so the boy and girl grow up to young manhood and womanhood, simple, innocent children, believing they are brother and sister and knowing nothing of the evils of the world. As they approach maturity nature makes itself felt in both, and an ardent love springs up between them, which is confirmed when finally both are told the truth about their ancestry. The disclosure is forced by the fact that one of Madame de la Tour's relatives has sent to Mauritius for Virginia, whom she promises to bring up as her child, arrange a suitable marriage for her, and in the end make her wealthy. In spite of the protestations of both young people, it is finally arranged that Virginia shall go and Paul remain on the island, an impatient but

faithful lover. For two years and a half little is heard from Virginia and what is learned convinces them that she is unhappy, and there is great joy in the two little families when they hear that she has refused to marry as her aunt dictated and is on the Saint-Geran, a ship returning to the island. In fact, the vessel is now in the offing and waits only for the morning to make a favorable landing. It lies off the opposite side of the island, and Paul and his friends cross and await with great anxiety the coming of the day, for they can see the ship in distress and realize that there is danger from an approaching storm. But we will allow Saint-Pierre to continue the tragic tale:

As soon as the Saint-Geran perceived that we were near enough to render her assistance, she continued to fire guns regularly at intervals of three minutes. Monsieur de la Bourdonnais caused great fires to be lighted at certain distances upon the strand, and sent to all the inhabitants of the neighborhood in search of provisions, planks, cables, and empty barrels. A number of people soon arrived, accompanied by their negroes loaded with provisions and cordage, which they had brought from the plantations of Golden Dust, from the district of La Flaque, and from the river of the Rampart. One of the most aged of these planters, approaching the governor, said to him, "We have heard all night hollow noises in the mountain; in the woods, the leaves of the trees are shaken, although there is no wind; the sea-birds seek refuge upon the land: it is certain that all these signs announce a hurricane." "Well, my friends," answered the governor, "we are prepared for it, and no doubt the vessel is also."

Everything, indeed, presaged the near approach of the hurricane. The center of the clouds in the zenith

was of a dismal black, while their skirts were tinged with a copper-colored hue. The air resounded with the cries of tropic-birds, petrels, frigate-birds, and innumerable other sea-fowl which, notwithstanding the obscurity of the atmosphere, were seen coming from every point of the horizon to seek for shelter in the island.

Towards nine in the morning we heard in the direction of the ocean the most terrific noise, like the sound of thunder mingled with that of torrents rushing down the steeps of lofty mountains. A general cry was heard of, "There is the hurricane!" and the next moment a frightful gust of wind dispelled the fog which covered the Isle of Amber and its channel. The Saint-Geran then presented herself to our view, her deck crowded with people, her yards and topmasts lowered down, and her flag half-mast high, moored by four cables at her bow and one at her stern. She had anchored between the Isle of Amber and the mainland, inside the chain of reefs which encircles the island, and which she had passed through in a place where no vessel had ever passed before. She presented her head to the waves that rolled in from the open sea, and as each billow rushed into the narrow strait where she lay, her bow lifted to such a degree as to show her keel; and at the same moment her stern, plunging into the water, disappeared altogether from our sight, as if it were swallowed up by the surges. In this position, driven by the winds and waves towards the shore, it was equally impossible for her to return by the passage through which she had made her way; or, by cutting her cables, to strand herself upon the beach, from which she was separated by sandbanks and reefs of rocks. Every billow which broke upon the coast advanced roaring to the bottom of the bay, throwing up heaps of shingle to the distance of fifty feet upon the land; then, rushing back, laid bare its sandy bed, from which it rolled immense stones, with a hoarse and dismal noise. The sea, swelled by the violence of the wind, rose higher every moment; and the whole channel between this island and the Isle of Amber was soon one vast sheet of white foam, full

of yawning pits of black and deep billows. Heaps of this foam, more than six feet high, were piled up at the bottom of the bay; and the winds which swept its surface carried masses of it over the steep sea-bank, scattering it upon the land to the distance of half a league. These innumerable white flakes, driven horizontally even to the very foot of the mountains, looked like snow issuing from the bosom of the ocean. The appearance of the horizon portended a lasting tempest: the sky and the water seemed blended together. Thick masses of clouds, of a frightful form, swept across the zenith with the swiftness of birds, while others appeared motionless as rocks. Not a single spot of blue sky could be discerned in the whole firmament; and a pale yellow gleam only lightened up all the objects of the earth, the sea, and the skies.

From the violent rolling of the ship, what we all dreaded happened at last. The cables which held her bow were torn away; she then swung to a single hawser, and was instantly dashed upon the rocks, at the distance of half a cable's length from the shore. A general cry of horror issued from the spectators. Paul rushed forward to throw himself into the sea, when, seizing him by the arm, "My son," I exclaimed, "would you perish?" "Let me go to save her," he cried, "or let me die!"

Seeing that despair had deprived him of reason, Domingo and I, in order to preserve him, fastened a long cord round his waist, and held it fast by the end. Paul then precipitated himself towards the Saint-Geran, now swimming, and now walking upon the rocks. Sometimes he had hopes of reaching the vessel, which the sea, by the reflux of its waves, had left almost dry, so that you could have walked round it on foot; but suddenly the billows, returning with fresh fury, shrouded it beneath mountains of water, which then lifted it upright upon its keel. The breakers at the same moment threw the unfortunate Paul far upon the beach, his legs bathed in blood, his bosom wounded, and himself half dead. The moment he had recovered the use of his senses, he arose,

and returned with new ardor towards the vessel, the parts of which now yawned asunder from the violent strokes of the billows. The crew then, despairing of their safety, threw themselves in crowds into the sea upon yards, planks, hencoops, tables, and barrels. At this moment we beheld an object which wrung our hearts with grief and pity; a young lady appeared in the stern-gallery of the Saint-Geran, stretching out her arms towards him who was making so many efforts to join her. It was Virginia. She had discovered her lover by his intrepidity. The sight of this amiable girl, exposed to such horrible danger, filled us with unutterable despair. As for Virginia, with a firm and dignified mien, she waved her hand, as if bidding us an eternal farewell. All the sailors had flung themselves into the sea, except one, who still remained upon the deck, and who was naked, and strong as Hercules. This man approached Virginia with respect, and kneeling at her feet, attempted to force her to throw off her clothes; but she repulsed him with modesty, and turned away her head. Then were heard redoubled cries from the spectators, "Save her!—save her!—do not leave her!" But at that moment a mountain billow, of enormous magnitude, ingulfed itself between the Isle of Amber and the coast, and menaced the shattered vessel, towards which it rolled bellowing, with its black sides and foaming head. At this terrible sight the sailor flung himself into the sea, and Virginia, seeing death inevitable, crossed her hands upon her breast, and, raising upwards her serene and beauteous eyes, seemed an angel prepared to take her flight to heaven.

Oh, day of horror! Alas! everything was swallowed up by the relentless billows. The surge threw some of the spectators, whom an impulse of humanity had prompted to advance towards Virginia, far upon the beach, and also the sailor who had endeavored to save her life. This man, who had escaped from almost certain death, kneeling on the sand, exclaimed,—"Oh, my God! Thou hast saved my life, but I would have given it willingly for that excellent young lady, who persevered in

not undressing herself as I had done." Domingo and I drew the unfortunate Paul to the shore. He was senseless, and blood was flowing from his mouth and ears. The governor ordered him to be put into the hands of a surgeon, while we, on our part, wandered along the beach, in hopes that the sea would throw up the corpse of Virginia. But the wind having suddenly changed, as it frequently happens during hurricanes, our search was in vain; and we had the grief of thinking that we should not be able to bestow on this sweet and unfortunate girl the last sad duties. We retired from the spot overwhelmed with dismay, and our minds wholly occupied by one cruel loss, although numbers had perished in the wreck. Some of the spectators seemed tempted, from the fatal destiny of this virtuous girl, to doubt the existence of Providence; for there are in life such terrible, such unmerited evils, that even the hope of the wise is sometimes shaken.

In the meantime Paul, who began to recover his senses, was taken to a house in the neighborhood, till he was in a fit state to be removed to his own home. Thither I bent my way with Domingo, to discharge the melancholy duty of preparing Virginia's mother and her friend for the disastrous event which had happened. When we had reached the entrance of the valley of the river of Fan-Palms, some negroes informed us that the sea had thrown up many pieces of the wreck in the opposite bay. We descended towards it; and one of the first objects which struck my sight upon the beach was the corpse of Virginia. The body was half covered with sand, and preserved the attitude in which we had seen her perish. Her features were not sensibly changed; her eyes were closed, and her countenance was still serene; but the pale purple hues of death were blended on her cheek with the blush of virgin modesty. One of her hands was placed upon her clothes; and the other, which she held on her heart, was fast closed, and so stiffened that it was with difficulty I took from its grasp a small box. How great was my emotion, when I saw it contained the picture of Paul,

which she had promised him never to part with while she lived! At the sight of this last mark of the fidelity and tenderness of the unfortunate girl, I wept bitterly. As for Domingo, he beat his breast, and pierced the air with his shrieks. With heavy hearts we then carried the body of Virginia to a fisherman's hut, and gave it in charge to some poor Malabar women, who carefully washed away the sand.

Paul survives the death of Virginia through one terrible month only, and their mothers perish only a little later.

The story is told by an old man to the writer, who sees the ruins of the two little cottages in the midst of a tract, which, once highly cultivated, is now covered with the rank vegetable growths of the tropics. It is in the description of the modest loves of the young people that Saint-Pierre shows his greatest power, and though the melodramatic ending may take from the artistic completeness of the story, yet there is a sweetness in it all and a sympathetic mingling of nature with human emotions that marked a new era in fiction.

BUST OF LOUIS XIV

CHAPTER XX

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (CONTINUED) MONTESQUIEU AND VOLTAIRE

MONTESQUIEU. Among the most celebrated of the French philosophical, political and social writers was Charles de Secondat, Baron de la Brede et de Montesquieu, born in 1689 at his father's château near Bordeaux. His family was old and established, and had been particularly distinguished by the number of successful lawyers it had produced. Given an education

which tinged his mind with skepticism and gave to his character a certain stoical cast, he continued his studies throughout his life and acquired a solid knowledge of the laws, with great learning in the classics and in science.

His life was an harmonious one. With means that raised him above want, but at the same time permitted no great extravagance, he lived quietly and unobtrusively, administering his affairs with skill and economy, and conducting his public duties with credit to himself and his country. In morals he was lax, as were his countrymen generally, but he never seemed to carry his dissipations to such an extent as to interfere with the orderly progress of his life.

He began his writings early and had already attained considerable celebrity when he published his *Persian Letters,* wherein, under the disguise of Persian affairs, he criticized French society in the time of the regency. The *Letters* immediately attained great popularity, but were everywhere the subject of criticism, or at least of public comment. Witty, brilliant, ironical and licentious, unscathing in comments upon State, Church and society, they expressed freely and emphatically the reaction against the despotism of Louis XIV. Usbek and Rica are two Persians who visit Europe and by their letters give an account of European manners and customs, and are regaled in their turn by friends who write of the troubles and intrigues of the eunuchs and ladies in the Eastern harems.

The *Letters* gave so much offense to the Church that when Montesquieu wished to enter the French Academy, Cardinal de Fleury declared that the King would not sanction such a thing; Montesquieu was so incensed that he declared he would leave France and live among more friendly strangers. The Cardinal thereupon withdrew his objection, and Montesquieu became a member, but, although he had agreed to make a new edition of his work and remove some of the objectionable features, he was never fully restored to the approval of the cardinal.

Montesquieu then traveled extensively through Europe; he remained two years in England and became very much interested in the English government. In fact, his approval of it was so strong and manifested itself so frequently in his subsequent writings that he met with considerable opposition among his own people for his Anglomania.

In 1734 he published his *Considerations sur les Causes de la Grandeur et de la Decadence des Romains,* which is considered the most able, if not the most important, of his works. It is a masterly review of Roman history, in which Montesquieu studied the operation of natural causes and applied them to the growth and decadence of Rome. He explains the latter as the gradual result of its vast domain, its bloody civil wars, the loss of patriotism on the part of the soldiers who were so long held in remote provinces, the debilitating effect of luxuries,

the division of the Empire, the inroads of the barbarians, and other factors, all of which, though now recognized, were then for the first time presented to the public. The popularity of his Roman history encouraged him to produce the *Spirit of Laws* (*Esprit des Lois*), the masterpiece upon which he had been for twenty years at work.

Seven years after the publication of this work, that is, in February, 1755, Montesquieu died, and although about his death-bed there were stormy scenes among those who desired him to change his views, yet his burial occurred with little ceremony and apparently under neglect from the people who had previously acclaimed him so highly.

II. The "Spirit of Laws." Voltaire somewhat extravagantly has said that "when the human race had lost their charters, Montesquieu rediscovered and restored them." However, it is true that in this great work questions of civil liberty were first treated in a scientific and enlightened manner by a modern writer, and probably no other work except Locke's *Essay on Government* was more influential among the American colonies in the days preceding the Revolution and during the early Constitutional period. The work was translated into other languages and studied everywhere with avidity, but owing to its radical utterances on Church and religion, it was bitterly attacked in France, where a large portion of the ruling classes refused their approval.

The *Spirit of Laws* is divided into thirty-one books, the first eight of which deal with the nature and principles of laws in general; the next five, with laws relating to offense and defense, to political liberty and taxation; the twelve following, with laws in relation to climate, soil, manners and customs, commerce, population and religion; the twenty-sixth book, with the relation of laws to the things which they regulate. The last five books are a kind of historical supplement, treating of Roman, French and feudal laws. In the limited extracts which follow, we shall make use of the well-known translation by Thomas Nugent, as revised by J. V. Prichard.

1. The following selection is quoted from the first book, and relates to the laws of nature:

The law which, impressing on our minds the idea of a Creator, inclines us towards Him, is the first in importance, though not in order, of natural laws. Man in a state of nature would have the faculty of knowing, before he had acquired any knowledge. Plain it is that his first ideas would not be of a speculative nature; he would think of the preservation of his being, before he would investigate its origin. Such a man would feel nothing in himself at first but impotency and weakness; his fears and apprehensions would be excessive; as appears from instances (were there any necessity of proving it) of savages found in forests, trembling at the motion of a leaf, and flying from every shadow.

In this state every man, instead of being sensible of his equality, would fancy himself inferior. There would therefore be no danger of their attacking one another: peace would be the first law of nature.

The natural impulse or desire which Hobbes attributes to mankind of subduing one another is far from being well founded. The idea of empire and dominion is so complex, and depends on so many other notions, that it could never be the first which occurred to the human understanding.

Hobbes inquires, "For what reason go men armed, and have locks and keys to fasten their doors, if they be not naturally in a state of war?" But is it not obvious that he attributes to mankind before the establishment of society what can happen but in consequence of this establishment, which furnishes them with motives for hostile attacks and self-defense?

Next to a sense of his weakness man would soon find that of his wants. Hence another law of nature would prompt him to seek for nourishment.

Fear, I have observed, would induce men to shun one another; but the marks of this fear being reciprocal, would soon engage them to associate. Besides, this association would quickly follow from the very pleasure one animal feels at the approach of another of the same species. Again, the attraction arising from the differences of sexes would enhance this pleasure, and the natural inclination they have for each other would form a third law.

Beside the sense or instinct which man possesses in common with brutes, he has the advantage of acquired knowledge; and thence arises a second tie, which brutes have not. Mankind have therefore a new motive of uniting; and a fourth law of nature results from the desire of living in society.

2. The third section of the first book bears the title *Of Positive Laws,* and continues in this manner:

As soon as man enters into a state of society he loses the sense of his weakness; equality ceases, and then commences the state of war.

Each particular society begins to feel its strength, whence arises a state of war between different nations. The individuals likewise of each society become sensible of their force; hence the principal advantages of this society they endeavor to convert to their own emolument, which constitutes a state of war between individuals.

These two different kinds of states give rise to human laws. Considered as inhabitants of so great a planet, which necessarily contains a variety of nations, they have laws relating to their mutual intercourse, which is what we call the *law of nations.* As members of a society that must be properly supported, they have laws relating to the governors and the governed, and this we distinguish by the name of *politic law.* They have also another sort of laws, as they stand in relation to each other; by which is understood the *civil law.*

The law of nations is naturally founded on this principle, that different nations ought in time of peace to do one another all the good they can, and in time of war as little injury as possible, without prejudicing their real interests.

The object of war is victory; that of victory is conquest; and that of conquest preservation. From this and the preceding principle all those rules are derived which constitute the *law of nations.*

All countries have a law of nations, not excepting the Iroquois themselves, though they devour their prisoners: for they send and receive ambassadors, and understand the rights of war and peace. The mischief is that their law of nations is not founded on true principles.

Besides the law of nations relating to all societies, there is a polity or civil constitution for each particularly considered. No society can subsist without a form of government. "The united strength of individuals," as Gravina well observes, "constitutes what we call the body politic."

The general strength may be in the hands of a single person, or of many. Some think that nature having established paternal authority, the most natural govern-

ment was that of a single person. But the example of paternal authority proves nothing. For if the power of a father relates to a single government, that of brothers after the death of a father, and that of cousin-germans after the decease of brothers, refer to a government of many. The political power necessarily comprehends the union of several families.

Better is it to say, that the government most conformable to nature is that which best agrees with the humor and disposition of the people in whose favor it exists.

The strength of individuals cannot be united without a conjunction of all their wills. "The conjunction of those wills," as Gravina again very justly observes, "is what we call the *civil state.*"

Law in general is human reason, inasmuch as it governs all the inhabitants of the earth: the political and civil laws of each nation ought to be only the particular cases in which human reason is applied.

They should be adapted in such a manner to the people for whom they are framed that it should be a great chance if those of one nation suit another.

They should be in relation to the nature and principle of each government; whether they form it, as may be said of politic laws; or whether they support it, as in the case of civil institutions.

They should be in relation to the climate of each country, to the quality of its soil, to its situation and extent, to the principal occupation of the natives, whether husbandmen, huntsmen, or shepherds: they should have relation to the degree of liberty which the constitution will bear; to the religion of the inhabitants, to their inclinations, riches, numbers, commerce, manners, and customs. In fine, they have relations to each other, as also to their origin, to the intent of the legislator, and to the order of things on which they are established; in all of which different lights they ought to be considered.

This is what I have undertaken to perform in the following work. These relations I shall examine, since all these together constitute what I call the *Spirit of Laws.*

I have not separated the political from the civil institutions, as I do not pretend to treat of laws, but of their spirit; and as this spirit consists in the various relations which the laws may bear to different objects, it is not so much my business to follow the natural order of laws as that of these relations and objects.

3. *Of Education in a Republican Government:*

It is in a republican government that the whole power of education is required. The fear of despotic governments naturally arises of itself amidst threats and punishments; the honor of monarchies is favored by the passions, and favors them in its turn; but virtue is a self-renunciation, which is ever arduous and painful.

This virtue may be defined as the love of the laws and of our country. As such love requires a constant preference of public to private interest, it is the source of all private virtues; for they are nothing more than this very preference itself.

This love is peculiar to democracies. In these alone the government is intrusted to private citizens. Now a government is like everything else: to preserve it we must love it.

Has it ever been known that kings were not fond of monarchy, or that despotic princes hated arbitrary power?

Everything therefore depends on establishing this love in a republic; and to inspire it ought to be the principal business of education: but the surest way of instilling it into children is for parents to set them an example.

People have it generally in their power to communicate their ideas to their children; but they are still better able to transfuse their passions.

If it happens otherwise, it is because the impressions made at home are effaced by those they have received abroad.

It is not the young people that degenerate; they are not spoiled till those of maturer age are already sunk into corruption.

4. *Of the Power of Punishments:*

Experience shows that in countries remarkable for the lenity of their laws the spirit of the inhabitants is as much affected by slight penalties as in other countries by severer punishments.

If an inconvenience or abuse arises in the state, a violent government endeavors suddenly to redress it; and instead of putting the old laws in execution, it establishes some cruel punishment, which instantly puts a stop to the evil. But the spring of government hereby loses its elasticity; the imagination grows accustomed to the severe as well as the milder punishment; and as the fear of the latter diminishes, they are soon obliged in every case to have recourse to the former. Robberies on the highway became common in some countries; in order to remedy this evil, they invented the punishment of breaking upon the wheel, the terror of which put a stop for a while to this mischievous practice. But soon after robberies on the highways became as common as ever.

Desertion in our days has grown to a very great height; in consequence of which it was judged proper to punish those delinquents with death; and yet their number did not diminish. The reason is very natural; a soldier, accustomed to venture his life, despises, or affects to despise, the danger of losing it. He is habituated to the fear of shame; it would have been therefore much better to have continued a punishment which branded him with infamy for life; the penalty was pretended to be increased, while it really diminished.

Mankind must not be governed with too much severity; we ought to make a prudent use of the means which nature has given us to conduct them. If we inquire into the cause of all human corruptions, we shall find that they proceed from the impunity of criminals, and not from the moderation of punishments.

Let us follow nature, who has given shame to man for his scourge; and let the heaviest part of the punishment be the infamy attending it.

But if there be some countries where shame is not a consequence of punishment, this must be owing to tyranny, which has inflicted the same penalties on villains and honest men.

And if there are others where men are deterred only by cruel punishments, we may be sure that this must, in a great measure, arise from the violence of the government which has used such penalties for slight transgressions.

It often happens that a legislator, desirous of remedying an abuse, thinks of nothing else; his eyes are open only to this object, and shut to its inconveniences. When the abuse is redressed, you see only the severity of the legislator; yet there remains an evil in the state that has sprung from this severity; the minds of the people are corrupted, and become habituated to despotism.

5. *Effects Arising from the Climate of England:*

In a nation so distempered by the climate as to have a disrelish of everything, nay, even of life, it is plain that the government most suitable to the inhabitants is that in which they cannot lay their uneasiness to any single person's charge, and in which, being under the direction rather of the laws than of the prince, it is impossible for them to change the government without subverting the laws themselves.

And if this nation has likewise derived from the climate a certain impatience of temper, which renders them incapable of bearing the same train of things for any long continuance, it is obvious that the government above mentioned is the fittest for them.

This impatience of temper is not very considerable of itself; but it may become so when joined with courage.

It is quite a different thing from levity, which makes people undertake or drop a project without cause; it borders more upon obstinacy, because it proceeds from so lively a sense of misery that it is not weakened even by the habit of suffering.

This temper in a free nation is extremely proper for disconcerting the projects of tyranny, which is always slow and feeble in its commencement, as in the end it is active and lively; which at first only stretches out a hand to assist, and exerts afterwards a multitude of arms to oppress.

Slavery is ever preceded by sleep. But a people who find no rest in any situation, who continually explore every part, and feel nothing but pain, can hardly be lulled to sleep.

Politics is a smooth file, which cuts gradually, and attains its end by a slow progression. Now the people of whom we have been speaking are incapable of bearing the delays, the details, and the coolness of negotiations: in these they are more unlikely to succeed than any other nation; hence they are apt to lose by treaties what they obtain by their arms.

6. *Of Public Debts and Of Their Payment:*

Some have imagined that it was for the advantage of a state to be indebted to itself: they thought that this multiplied riches by increasing the circulation.

Those who are of this opinion have, I believe, confounded a circulating paper which represents money, or a circulating paper which is the sign of the profits that a company has or will make by commerce, with a paper which represents a debt. The first two are extremely advantageous to the state: the last can never be so; and all that we can expect from it is, that individuals have a good security from the government for their money. But let us see the inconveniences which result from it.

1. If foreigners possess much paper which represents a debt, they annually draw out of the nation a considerable sum for interest.

2. In a nation that is thus perpetually in debt the exchange must be very low.

3. The taxes raised for the payment of the interest of the debt are an injury to the manufactures, by raising the price of the artificer's labor.

4. It takes the true revenue of the state from those who have activity and industry, to convey it to the indolent; that is, it gives facilities for labor to those who do not work, and clogs with difficulties those who do work.

These are its inconveniences: I know of no advantages. Ten persons have each a yearly income of a thousand crowns, either in land or trade; this raises to the nation, at five per cent, a capital of two hundred thousand crowns. If these ten persons employed one-half of their income, that is, five thousand crowns, in paying the interest of a hundred thousand crowns, which they had borrowed of others, that still would be only to the state as two hundred thousand crowns; that is, in the language of the algebraists, 200,000 crowns—100,000 crowns+100,000 crowns=200,000.

People are thrown perhaps into this error by reflecting that the paper which represents the debt of a nation is the sign of riches; for none but a rich state can support such paper without falling into decay. And if it does not fall, it is a proof that the state has other riches besides. They say that it is not an evil, because there are resources against it; and that it is an advantage, since these resources surpass the evil.

It is necessary that there should be a proportion between the state as creditor and the state as debtor. The state may be a creditor to infinity, but it can only be a debtor to a certain degree, and when it surpasses that degree the title of creditor vanishes.

If the credit of the state has never received the least blemish, it may do what has been so happily practiced in one of the kingdoms of Europe; that is, it may require a great quantity of specie, and offer to reimburse every individual, at least if they will not reduce their interest.

When the state borrows, the individuals fix the interest; when it pays, the interest for the future is fixed by the state.

It is not sufficient to reduce the interest: it is necessary to erect a sinking-fund from the advantage of the reduction, in order to pay every year a part of the capital; a proceeding so happy that its success increases every day.

When the credit of the state is not entire, there is a new reason for endeavoring to form a sinking-fund, because this fund being once established will soon procure the public confidence.

1. If the state is a republic, the government of which is in its own nature consistent with its entering into projects of a long duration, the capital of the sinking-fund may be inconsiderable; but it is necessary in a monarchy for the capital to be much greater.

2. The regulations ought to be so ordered that all the subjects of the state may support the weight of the establishment of these funds, because they have all the weight of the establishment of the debt; thus the creditor of the state, by the sums he contributes, pays himself.

3. There are four classes of men who pay the debts of the state: the proprietors of the land, those engaged in trade, the laborers and artificers, and, in fine, the annuitants either of the state or of private people. Of these four classes the last, in a case of necessity one would imagine, ought least to be spared, because it is a class entirely passive, while the state is supported by the active vigor of the other three. But as it cannot be higher taxed, without destroying the public confidence, of which the state in general and these three classes in particular have the utmost need; as a breach in the public faith cannot be made on a certain number of subjects without seeming to be made on all; as the class of creditors is always the most exposed to the projects of ministers, and always in their eye, and under their immediate inspection, the state is obliged to give them a singular protection, that the part which is indebted may

From Statue by Houdon, Comédie Française, Paris

VOLTAIRE
1696–1778

never have the least advantage over that which is the creditor.

III. Voltaire. One of the most prolific writers of all time and one of the most influential men of the eighteenth century was François-Marie Arouet, who was born in Paris in 1694 and educated by the Jesuits, by whom he was regarded as one of their most brilliant scholars. At an early age he was known as a writer of witty and sarcastic verses, and when he was introduced to the brilliant society of the last days of Louis XIV he remained a very reluctant student of law and lived a dissipated life among the wits of the court. Sent to Holland in order that his wild career might be checked, he failed to justify the hopes of his father, and soon was brought back to Paris because of a love affair.

Under the Regency he seems to have kept some of his promises of reformation, but his brilliant wit and sarcastic tongue soon brought him into trouble, and he was arrested and confined for eleven months in the Bastille. His release in 1718 was followed by the production of his first tragedy, *Oedipus,* which was received with great favor, and the young author was placed by his admirers among the masters of French tragedy. It was about this time that he assumed his surname, Voltaire, which some think is an anagram from the letters of *Arouet l. I.* (*le jeune,* junior).

For a long time Voltaire's reputation was that of a dramatic poet, though he produced

the *Henriade,* an epic devoted to the glorification of Henry IV, and for some years was acclaimed as the French Homer, but the epic lost favor as time passed. As a lyricist he achieved some popularity, succeeded in obtaining pensions from the court, and by the death of his father and some lucky speculations acquired financial independence. On the way to Holland in 1722 he met Rousseau and read aloud to him *Le Pour et le Contre* (*For and Against*), a poem which expressed disbelief in Christianity, but faith in deism. Unfortunately, he grew witty at the expense of the melancholy philosopher, and a lifelong enmity resulted. Soon Voltaire quarreled with Chevalier de Rohan, a representative of one of the most important families in France, and after having been roughly handled by the bullies of the latter, appealed for justice, but succeeded only in finding himself thrown into the Bastille a second time. Having promised to leave the kingdom, however, he was released within a few days and made his way to England, where he made the acquaintance of Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Chesterfield, of Pope, Swift, Gay, Congreve, Thompson and Young, and in their company mastered the English tongue.

During his residence in England he published the *Henriade,* and succeeded in introducing it into France, although the government took great precautions against it. At the same time he was engaged in writing his *History of Charles XII* and in preparing the *Lettres*

Philosophiques, by which he intended to make known to his countrymen the thoughts and the philosophy of England, which he greatly admired. On his return to France in 1728 he went at once to Paris, where he resided for four years and spent most of his time at work upon a number of dramas, which enhanced his reputation, but his attitude toward the government was such that he narrowly escaped being put for a third time into the Bastille. His *Lettres,* which were published about this time, may be considered the first of his revolutionary writings.

When Voltaire made the acquaintance of Madame du Chatelet, he found a friend to whom he was indebted for shelter and residence during the stormy time that followed the publication of the works we have just mentioned. Madame Chatelet was about twenty-eight, a woman of keen intellect, refinement and high culture. For about fifteen years Voltaire made his home at her château when he was not moving about from one place to another, and always he received from her the most sympathetic assistance and the good advice which a sensible woman of scientific attainments could give. But his pen was still embittered against the government, and his revolutionary ideas increased in violence and strength. Often in disgrace, he nevertheless managed to make friends at court, and, finally, under the influence of Madame de Pompadour, the famous mistress of Louis XV, he was received

into the Academy and appointed historiographer of France. In 1749 Madame du Chatelet died, and Voltaire returned to Paris to make his home with one of his nieces. The people were somewhat estranged from him by this time, and his enemies made life so uncomfortable that he abandoned Paris and, accepting an invitation from Frederick II, King of Prussia, went to Berlin in 1750. He was received with great enthusiasm and affection by the Prussian monarch and lodged at Potsdam in the palace: but the two men were so opposed in character that the violent friendship was not of long duration, and after a series of bitter quarrels Voltaire left his royal patron less than two years after he had reached Berlin. He was not permitted to go without an extremely annoying incident, for Frederick ordered him arrested on the ground that he was carrying away one of his royal patron's books. It may be imagined that Voltaire's rage was increased by such treatment, and that Frederick became extremely unpopular among men of letters generally.

Louis XV had been offended by Voltaire's desertion to Frederick, and on the writer's return to Paris he found himself so unpopular among the courtiers that he moved to Geneva and bought an estate, only to find that his crotchets made life as unhappy for him under a democratic form of government as in a monarchy. Thereupon he bought for his lifetime two estates in France, called Ferney, where the

possession of certain feudal rights made him practically independent of all restraint. Feeling safe here, he assumed a more violent attitude toward those abuses which he desired to destroy and, though over sixty years of age, produced in rapid succession an immense number of pamphlets on a great variety of subjects, all attacking the injustice of persecution, whether religious or political. Every one who suffered because of his beliefs found in Voltaire a ready and powerful champion, and his popularity among the people of France was unbounded. He was looked upon as the apostle of freedom, justice and independence, and his labor bore fruit afterward in a nation-wide intolerance of bigotry and oppression. In the year 1778 Voltaire, now past eighty, received an invitation from his friends and admirers to visit Paris. Louis XV was dead, and his successor, however much he might dislike the idea of the reformer in Paris, was too inert to oppose it, and Voltaire, defying his physician's advice, made the difficult journey. Everywhere he was received with unbounded enthusiasm. In his own presence at the *Theatre Français* his bust was crowned, and at a meeting of the French Academy he listened to long and enthusiastic eulogies on his powers and accomplishments. Nearly every person of importance in the city visited him, and among them was Benjamin Franklin, the newly accredited representative of the young republic of the United States, who brought his grandson

to receive the blessing of the aged philosopher. Voltaire, placing his hand upon the young man's head, uttered in English the words, "God and Liberty."

His personal appearance at the time of his return to Paris has been described in the following manner:

> M. de Voltaire appeared in full dress on Tuesday, for the first time since his arrival in Paris. He had on a red coat lined with ermine; a large peruke, in the fashion of Louis XIV, black, unpowdered; and in which his withered visage was so buried that you saw only his two eyes shining like carbuncles. His head was surmounted by a square red cap in the form of a crown, which seemed only laid on. He had in his hand a small nibbed cane; and the public of Paris, not accustomed to see him in this accouterment, laughed a good deal.

As his physician had foreseen, the excitement was too great, and on the thirtieth of May, 1778, Voltaire died. His body was subsequently buried in the Pantheon, where, it is probable, it still remains.

IV. The Work of Voltaire. Probably no writer of modern times has been more severely castigated by both Protestants and Catholics or has been looked upon as more infamous in his doctrine; yet with it all, Voltaire's position is that of a warrior against intolerance and in favor of free thought. That he used his weapons unsparingly and with injustice, that the licentiousness of many of his writings is open to the severest condemnation, and that his work was destructive more than otherwise, is gen-

erally admitted, but the judgment of the present is more moderate than that of his contemporaries, and Voltaire is at last given credit for having been one of the powerful instrumentalities in bringing freedom and personal independence to the human race. He died unshriven and without repentance, but with an expressed consciousness of rectitude in his intentions.

We may consider him purely from the intellectual side as a man with one of the most active brains the world has ever known, a man to whom mental activity was a passion. That he was vain, ambitious, loved applause and glory, was subject to fits of intense rage, was jealous, mean, irreverent, a liar and a trickster, even his admirers cannot disprove, yet he was zealous for human welfare, and his life was full of charitable acts that showed a sympathetic soul beneath.

He is no longer regarded as a reliable philosopher, and his ideas are chaotic and inconsistent. As an historian, his attitude was exactly the opposite of that of Bossuet, for he was blind to the supernatural, eliminated providential interference, and sought in the natural course of human events the causes and explanations of everything. Withal, he was original and studious, so that his works have been of important service to later writers, and his historical skepticism has aided others in determining the truth. He was more conservative in politics than in religion, for against the

Church he had a violent prejudice, a destructive passion.

As a literary critic Voltaire takes high rank, and here again he was usually conservative, and belonged to the liberal classical school, applying to his criticisms the common sense for which he always pleaded in every intellectual discussion. His dramas are of the conventional order, pompous and monotonous, with occasional flashes of passion. Perhaps the strongest characteristic of his writings, however, is his sarcastic wit, for no writer has been able to throw into his work more epigrammatic sentences, a lighter mockery or a bitterer sarcasm than Voltaire.

To-day his writings are little read, compared to their vogue at an earlier date. However, we find some of them are deserving of present consideration. The following critical paragraph from the pen of Edward Dowden is an eloquent summary of his genius:

> In Voltaire's myriad-minded correspondence the whole man may be found—his fire, his sense, his universal curiosity, his wit, his malignity, his goodness, his Protean versatility, his ruling ideas; and one may say that the whole of eighteenth-century Europe presses into the pages. He is not only the man of letters, the student of science, the philosopher; he is equally interested in politics, in social reform, in industry, in agriculture, in political economy, in philology, and, together with these, in the thousand incidents of private life.

V. Voltaire's Tales. In most of the romances of Voltaire there is a philosophical or

moral object in view. The author contrasts what is with what ought to be, pedantry with ignorance, the corruptness of teachers of morality with their doctrines; and the full import of the story is rarely apparent until its close. No portion of his voluminous works have suffered so little in the passage of time as these self-same tales, for some of the evils against which they were written still exist, and their wit and satire are as keen as ever. The application of good common sense is the doctrine he preaches and nowhere more effectively than in the tales. Unfortunately, though preaching in the main a moral lesson, there is so constant an assumption of general licentiousness and, in many, indulgence in so much that offends the sensibilities of the modern reader that they can never be popular and are reading only for mature and settled minds.

In *Memnon* the folly of aspiring to the height of wisdom is shown; in *Zadig,* that we have no control over the events of our lives; in *Babouc,* that not everything should be frivolously viewed. In *Micromegas,* an inhabitant of the star Sirius visits Saturn and with an inhabitant of that planet comes to the earth, where they discover the absurdities of human existence. Of *Candide,* the most celebrated, we shall have more to say.

VI. "JEANNOT AND COLIN." Some of the briefer stories are perfect gems in their way, as is the following, *Jeannot and Colin,* which we give in the translation of R. B. Boswell:

Many trustworthy persons have seen Jeannot and Colin when they went to school at Issoire in Auvergne, a town famous all over the world for its college and its kettles. Jeannot was the son of a dealer in mules, a man of considerable reputation; Colin owed his existence to a worthy husbandman who dwelt in the outskirts of the town, and cultivated his farm with the help of four mules, and who, after paying tolls and tallage, scutage and salt duty, poundage, poll-tax, and tithes, did not find himself particularly well off at the end of the year.

Jeannot and Colin were very handsome lads for natives of Auvergne; they were much attached to each other, and had little secrets together and private understandings, such as old comrades always recall with pleasure when they afterwards meet in a wider world.

Their schooldays were drawing near their end, when a tailor one day brought Jeannot a velvet coat of three colors with a waistcoat of Lyons silk to match in excellent taste; this suit of clothes was accompanied by a letter addressed to Monsieur de La Jeannotière. Colin admired the coat, and was not at all jealous; but Jeannot assumed an air of superiority which distressed Colin. From that moment Jeannot paid no more heed to his lessons, but was always looking at his reflection in the glass, and despised everybody but himself. Some time afterwards a footman arrived post-haste, bringing a second letter, addressed this time to His Lordship the Marquis de La Jeannotière; it contained an order from his father for the young nobleman, his son, to be sent to Paris. As Jeannot mounted the chaise to drive off, he stretched out his hand to Colin with a patronizing smile befitting his rank. Colin felt his own insignificance, and wept. So Jeannot departed in all his glory.

Readers who like to know all about things may be informed that Monsieur Jeannot, the father, had rapidly gained immense wealth in business. You ask how those great fortunes are made? It all depends upon luck. Monsieur Jeannotière had a comely person, and so had his wife; moreover her complexion was fresh and bloom-

ing. They had gone to Paris to prosecute a lawsuit which was ruining them, when Fortune, who lifts up and casts down human beings at her pleasure, presented them with an introduction to the wife of an army hospital contractor, a man of great talent, who could boast of having killed more soldiers in one year than the cannon had destroyed in ten. Jeannot took the lady's fancy, and Jeannot's wife captivated the gentleman. Jeannot soon became a partner in the business, and entered into other speculations. When one is in the current of the stream it is only necessary to let oneself drift, and so an immense fortune may sometimes be made without any trouble. The beggars who watch you from the bank, as you glide along in full sail, open their eyes in astonishment; they wonder how you have managed to get on; they envy you at all events, and write pamphlets against you which you never read. That was what happened to Jeannot senior, who was soon styled Monsieur de La Jeannotière, and, after buying a marquisate at the end of six months, he took the young nobleman his son away from school, to launch him into the fashionable world of Paris.

Colin, always affectionately disposed, wrote a kind letter to his old schoolfellow in order to offer his congratulations. The little Marquis sent him no answer, which grieved Colin sorely.

The first thing that his father and mother did for the young gentleman was to get him a tutor. This tutor, who was a man of distinguished manners and profound ignorance, could teach his pupil nothing. The Marquis wished his son to learn Latin, but the Marchioness would not hear of it. They consulted the opinion of a certain author who had obtained considerable celebrity at that time from some popular works which he had written. He was invited to dinner, and the master of the house began by saying:

"Sir, as you know Latin, and are conversant with the manners of the court——"

"I, sir! Latin! I don't know a word of it," answered the man of wit; "and it is just as well for me that I

don't, for one can speak one's own language better, when the attention is not divided between it and foreign tongues. Look at all our ladies; they are far more charming in conversation than men, their letters are written with a hundred times more grace of expression. They owe that superiority over us to nothing else but their ignorance of Latin."

"There now! Was I not right?" said the lady. "I want my son to be a man of wit, and to make way in the world. You see that if he were to learn Latin, it would be his ruin. Tell me, if you please, are plays and operas performed in Latin? Are the proceedings in court conducted in Latin, when one has a lawsuit on hand? Do people make love in Latin?"

The Marquis, confounded by these arguments, passed sentence, and it was decided that the young nobleman should not waste his time in studying Cicero, Horace, and Vergil.

"But what is he to learn then? For still, I suppose, he will have to know something. Might he not be taught a little geography?"

"What good will that do him?" answered the tutor. "When my lord Marquis goes to visit his country seat, will not his postilions know the roads? There will be no fear of their going astray. One does not want a sextant in order to travel, and it is quite possible to make a journey between Paris and Auvergne without knowing anything about the latitude and longitude of either."

"Very true," replied the father; "but I have heard people speak of a noble science, which is, I think, called *astronomy*."

"Bless my soul!" rejoined the tutor. "Do we regulate our behavior in this world by the stars? Why should my lord Marquis wear himself out in calculating an eclipse, when he will find it predicted correctly to a second in the almanac, which will moreover inform him of all the movable feasts, the age of the moon, and that of all the princesses in Europe?"

The Marchioness was quite of the tutor's opinion, the little Marquis was in a state of the highest delight, and his father was very undecided.

"What then is my son to be taught?" said he.

"To make himself agreeable," answered the friend whom they had consulted; "for, if he knows the way to please, he will know everything worth knowing; it is an art which he will learn from her ladyship, his mother, without the least trouble to either of them."

The Marchioness, at these words, smiled graciously upon the courtly ignoramus, and said:

"It is easy to see, sir, that you are a most accomplished gentleman; my son will owe all his education to you. I imagine, however, that it will not be a bad thing for him to know a little history."

"Nay, madam,—what good would that do him?" he answered. "Assuredly the only entertaining and useful history is that of the passing hour. All ancient histories, as one of our clever writers has observed, are admitted to be nothing but fables; and for us moderns it is an inextricable chaos. What does it matter to the young gentleman, your son, if Charlemagne instituted the twelve Paladins of France, or if his successor had an impediment in his speech?"

"Nothing was ever said more wisely!" exclaimed the tutor. "The minds of children are smothered under a mass of useless knowledge; but of all sciences that which seems to me the most absurd, and the one best adapted to extinguish every spark of genius, is geometry. That ridiculous science is concerned with surfaces, lines, and points which have no existence in nature. In imagination a hundred thousand curved lines may be made to pass between a circle and a straight line which touches it, although in reality you could not insert so much as a straw. Geometry, indeed, is nothing more than a bad joke."

The Marquis and his lady did not understand much of the meaning of what the tutor was saying; but they were quite of his way of thinking.

"A nobleman like his lordship," he continued, "should not dry up his brain with such unprofitable studies. If, some day, he should require one of those sublime geometricians to draw a plan of his estate, he can have them measured for his money. If he should wish to trace out the antiquity of his lineage, which goes back to the most remote ages, all he will have to do will be to send for some learned Benedictine. It is the same with all the other arts. A young lord born under a lucky star is neither a painter, nor a musician, nor an architect, nor a sculptor; but he may make all these arts flourish by encouraging them with his generous approval. Doubtless it is much better to patronize than to practice them. It will be quite enough if my lord the young Marquis has taste; it is the part of artists to work for him, and thus there is a great deal of truth in the remark that people of quality (that is if they are very rich) know everything without learning anything, because, in point of fact and in the long run, they are masters of all the knowledge which they can command and pay for."

The agreeable ignoramus then took part again in the conversation, and said:

"You have well remarked, madam, that the great end of man's existence is to succeed in society. Is it, forsooth, any aid to the attainment of this success to have devoted oneself to the sciences? Does any one ever think in select company of talking about geometry? Is a well-bred gentleman ever asked what star rises to-day with the sun? Does any one at the supper table ever want to know if Clodion the Long Haired crossed the Rhine?"

"No, indeed!" exclaimed the Marchioness de La Jeannotière, whose charms had been her passport into the world of fashion; "and my son must not stifle his genius by studying all that trash. But, after all, what is he to be taught? For it is a good thing that a young lord should be able to shine when occasion offers, as my noble husband has said. I remember once hearing an abbé remark that the most entertaining science was something the name of which I have forgotten—it begins with a *B*."

"With a *B*, madam? It was not botany, was it?"

"No, it certainly was not botany that he mentioned; it began, as I tell you, with a *B*, and ended in *onry*."

"Ah, madam, I understand!—It was blazonry or heraldry. That is indeed a most profound science; but it has ceased to be fashionable since the custom has died out of having one's coat of arms painted on the carriage doors; it was the most useful thing imaginable in a well-ordered State. Besides, that line of study would be endless, for at the present day there is not a barber who is without his armorial bearings, and you know that whatever becomes common loses its attraction."

Finally, after all the pros and cons of the different sciences had been examined and discussed, it was decided that the young Marquis should learn dancing.

Dame Nature, who disposes everything at her own will and pleasure, had given him a talent which soon developed itself with prodigious success; it was that of singing street ballads in a charming style. His youthful grace accompanying this superlative gift, caused him to be regarded as a young man of the highest promise. He was a favorite with the ladies, and, having his head crammed with songs, he had no lack of mistresses to whom to address his verses. He stole the line—"Bacchus with the Loves at play"—from one ballad, and made it rhyme with—"night and day"—taken out of another, while a third furnished him with "charms" and "alarms." But inasmuch as there were always some feet more or less than were wanted in his verses, he had them corrected at the rate of twenty sovereigns a song. And "The Literary Year" placed him in the same rank with such sonneteers as La Fare, Chaulieu, Hamilton, Sarrasin, and Voiture.

Her ladyship the Marchioness then believed that she was indeed the mother of a genius, and gave a supper to all the wits of Paris. The young man's head was soon turned upside down, he acquired the art of talking without knowing the meaning of what he said, and perfected himself in the habit of being fit for nothing. When his father saw him so eloquent, he keenly regretted that he

had not had him taught Latin, or he would have purchased some high appointment for him in the law. His mother, who was of more heroic sentiments, took upon herself to solicit a regiment for her son; in the meantime he made love,—and love is sometimes more expensive than a regiment. He squandered his money freely, while his parents drained their purses and credit to a lower and lower ebb by living in the grandest style.

A young widow of good position in their neighborhood, who had only a moderate income, was well enough disposed to make some effort to prevent the great wealth of the Marquis and Marchioness de La Jeannotière from going altogether, by marrying the young Marquis and so appropriating what remained. She enticed him to her house, let him make love to her, allowed him to see that she was not quite indifferent to him, led him on by degrees, enchanted him, and made him her devoted slave without the least difficulty. She would give him at one time commendation and at another time counsel; she became his father and mother's best friend. An old neighbor proposed marriage; the parents, dazzled with the splendor of the alliance, joyfully fell in with the scheme, and gave their only son to their most intimate lady friend. The young Marquis was thus about to wed a woman whom he adored, and by whom he was beloved in return. The friends of the family congratulated him, the marriage settlement was on the point of being signed, the bridal dress and the epithalamium were both well under way.

One morning our young gentleman was on his knees before the charmer whom fond affection and esteem were so soon to make his own; they were tasting in animated and tender converse the first fruits of future happiness; they were settling how they should lead a life of perfect bliss, when one of his lady mother's footmen presented himself, scared out of his wits.

"Here's fine news which may surprise you!" said he; "the bailiffs are in the house of my lord and lady, removing the furniture. All has been seized by the creditors. I am going to do what I can to get my wages paid."

"Let us see what has happened," said the Marquis, "and discover the meaning of all this."

"Yes," said the widow, "go and punish those rascals—go, quick!"

He hurried homewards, he arrived at the house, his father was already in prison, all the servants had fled, each in a different direction, carrying off whatever they could lay their hands upon. His mother was alone, helpless, forlorn, and bathed in tears; she had nothing left her but the remembrance of her former prosperity, her beauty, her faults, and her foolish extravagance.

After the son had condoled with his mother for a long time, he said at last:

"Let us not despair; this young widow loves me to distraction; she is even more generous than she is wealthy, I can assure you, I will fly to her for succor, and bring her to you."

So he returns to his mistress, and finds her conversing in private with a fascinating young officer.

"What! Is that you, my lord de La Jeannotière? What business have you with me? How can you leave your mother by herself in this way? Go, and stay with the poor woman, and tell her that she shall always have my good wishes. I am in want of a waiting-woman now, and will gladly give her the preference."

"My lad," said the officer, "you seem pretty tall and straight; if you would like to enter my company, I will make it worth your while to enlist."

The Marquis, stupefied with astonishment, and secretly enraged, went off in search of his former tutor, confided to him all his troubles, and asked his advice. He proposed that he should become, like himself, a tutor of the young.

"Alas! I know nothing; you have taught me nothing whatever, and you are the primary cause of all my unhappiness." And as he spoke he began to sob.

"Write novels," said a wit who was present; "it is an excellent resource to fall back upon at Paris."

The young man, in more desperate straits than ever, hastened to the house of his mother's father-confessor; he

was a Theatine monk of the very highest reputation, who directed the souls of none but ladies of the first rank in society. As soon as he saw him, the reverend gentleman rushed to meet him.

"Good gracious! My lord Marquis, where is your carriage? How is your honored mother, the Marchioness?"

The unfortunate young fellow related the disaster that had befallen his family. As he explained the matter further the Theatine assumed a graver air, one of less concern and more self-importance.

"My son, herein you may see the hand of Providence; riches serve only to corrupt the heart. The Almighty has shown special favor then to your mother in reducing her to beggary. Yes, sir, so much the better!—she is now sure of her salvation."

"But, father, in the meantime are there no means of obtaining some succor in this world?"

"Farewell, my son! There is a lady of the court waiting for me."

The Marquis felt ready to faint. He was treated after much the same manner by all his friends, and learned to know the world better in half a day than in all the rest of his life.

As he was plunged in overwhelming despair, he saw an old-fashioned traveling chaise, more like a covered tumbril than anything else, and furnished with leather curtains, followed by four enormous wagons all heavily laden. In the chaise was a young man in rustic attire; his round and rubicund face had an air of kindness and good temper. His little wife, whose sunburnt countenance had a pleasing if not a refined expression, was jolted about as she sat beside him. The vehicle did not go quite so fast as a dandy's chariot, the traveler had plenty of time to look at the Marquis, as he stood motionless, absorbed in his grief.

"Oh! good Heavens!" he exclaimed; "I believe that is Jeannot there!"

Hearing that name the Marquis raised his eyes,—the chaise stopped.

" 'Tis Jeannot himself! Yes, it is Jeannot!"

The plump little man with one leap sprang to the ground, and ran to embrace his old companion. Jeannot recognized Colin; signs of sorrow and shame covered his countenance.

"You have forsaken your old friend," said Colin; "but be you as grand a lord as you like, I shall never cease to love you."

Jeannot, confounded and cut to the heart, told him with sobs something of his history.

"Come into the inn where I am lodging, and tell me the rest," said Colin; "kiss my little wife, and let us go and dine together."

They went, all three of them, on foot, and the baggage followed.

"What in the world is all this paraphernalia? Does it belong to you?"

"Yes, it is all mine and my wife's, we are just come from the country. I am at the head of a large tin, iron, and copper factory, and have married the daughter of a rich tradesman and general provider of all useful commodities for great folks and small. We work hard, and God gives us his blessing. We are satisfied with our condition in life, and are quite happy. We will help our friend—Jeannot—Give up being a Marquis; all the grandeur in the world is not equal in value to a good friend. You will return with me into the country; I will teach you my trade, it is not a difficult one to learn; I will give you a share in the business, and we will live together with light hearts in that corner of the earth where we were born."

Jeannot, overcome by this kindness, felt himself divided between sorrow and joy, tenderness and shame; and he said within himself:

"All my fashionable friends have proved false to me, and Colin, whom I despised, is the only one who comes to my succor. What a lesson!"

Colin's generosity developed in Jeannot's heart the germ of that good disposition which the world had not yet choked. He felt he could not desert his father and mother.

"We will take care of your mother," said Colin; "and as for the good man your father, who is in prison,—I know something of business matters,—his creditors, when they see that he has nothing more, will agree to a moderate composition. I will see to all that myself."

Colin was as good as his word, and succeeded in effecting the father's release from prison. Jeannot returned to his old home with his parents, who resumed their former occupation. He married Colin's sister, who, being like her brother in disposition, rendered her husband very happy. And so Jeannot the father, and Jeannotte the mother, and Jeannot the son came to see that vanity is no true source of happiness.

VII. "CANDIDE." The object of *Candide, or Optimism,* is to ridicule the notion that everything in the world is for the best, by skillfully showing the calamities of life in an aggravated form. It is one of the most flippant of Voltaire's romances, yet it contains the final utterance of his reflection and judgment. Some readers will find in it nothing but wit and impropriety, while others will see the bitter melancholy of the writer. No horror, no degradation of humanity, is omitted, and the philosopher laughs at them all, but in such a grim and relentless manner that they seem the more serious because of the wit and raillery with which they are treated. It is considered the work in which Voltaire's style reaches the height of its perfection and the embodiment of the finest qualities of French genius.

The following extract from the story will show how one of the milder misfortunes is described and the conversation that goes with it:

Candid went and threw himself at the feet of his charitable Anabaptist James, and drew such an affecting picture of the state to which his friend was reduced, that the good man did not hesitate to receive Dr. Pangloss into his house, and he had him cured at his own expense. As he wrote a clear hand, and knew arithmetic perfectly, James the Anabaptist made him his accountant. At the end of two months, being obliged to go to Lisbon on matters of business, he took his two philosophers on board with him, and on the voyage Pangloss explained to him how everything was so ordered that it could not be better. But James was not of this opinion.

"Men," said he, "must have corrupted their nature a little, for they were not born wolves, yet wolves they have become. God never gave them cannons, and twenty-four pound shot, and bayonets; but they have made these things for their mutual destruction. I might adduce the misery caused by bankruptcies, and the justice of the law which takes possession of the bankrupt's property so as to deprive the creditors of it."

"All that was indispensable," answered the one-eyed philosopher; "private misfortunes promote the public good, so that the more private misfortunes there are, the better it is for the world."

While he was arguing in this manner, the sky grew dark, the wind blew from all points of the compass, and the ship was attacked by a most frightful storm, within sight of the harbor of Lisbon.

Half of the passengers, exhausted almost to death by those inconceivable tortures which the rolling of a vessel communicates to the nerves and all the humors of the body tossed about in opposite directions, had not even the energy to feel alarmed at the danger to which they were exposed; whilst the other half gave vent to piteous cries and prayers. The sails were torn to rags, the masts were shattered, the ship was leaking. All who were able were hard at work, but no one heard what another said, and no orders were given. The Anabaptist was on deck, lending a little help at the ropes, when a savage sailor

dealt him a rude buffet which stretched him on the planks; but, with the force of the blow that he gave him, the sailor was thrown forward so violently that he fell overboard head foremost. He remained suspended in midair, caught by a piece of a broken mast. The kind-hearted James ran to his rescue, and assisted him to climb back, but, overbalancing himself in the effort, he was himself precipitated into the sea before the sailor's eyes, who allowed him to perish without deigning so much as to look at him. Candid hastened to the spot, and saw his benefactor rise to the surface for a moment, and then disappear for ever. He was inclined to cast himself into the sea after him, but the philosopher Pangloss prevented his doing so, proving to him that the roadstead of Lisbon had been made expressly that the Anabaptist might be drowned there. While he was engaged in demonstrating this proposition on *a priori* grounds, the vessel was broken up, and all on board perished with the exception of Pangloss, Candid, and the brutal mariner who had caused the excellent Anabaptist to be drowned; the rascal swam safely to shore, whither Pangloss and Candid were carried on a plank.

When they had recovered a little strength, they walked towards Lisbon; they had still some money, with which they hoped to save themselves from starvation, after having escaped the fury of the tempest.

Hardly had they entered the city, bewailing the death of their benefactor, when they felt the earth tremble under their feet, the sea rose in the harbor as if it were boiling, and dashed to pieces the ships that were at anchor. Clouds of fiery ashes filled the streets and public places, the houses tottered and fell, overturned from roof to basement, the very foundations being broken up; thirty thousand inhabitants of all ages and of both sexes were crushed beneath the ruins. The sailor whistled, and said with an oath:

"There will be something to be picked up here."

"What can be the sufficient reason of this phenomenon?" said Pangloss.

"This is surely the last day!" exclaimed Candid.

The sailor immediately rushed among the ruins, facing death itself in the search for money, found some, took possession of it, got drunk on it, and slept himself sober, amidst the wreck of fallen houses, surrounded by the dying and the dead. Pangloss, however, pulled him by the sleeve, saying:

"My friend, this is not right, you are wanting in respect to the universal reason."

"Blood and thunder!" returned the other, "I am a sailor, and was born at Batavia; I have trampled four times on the crucifix in as many voyages to Japan; you have found a fine subject for your universal reason!"

Some fragments of falling masonry had wounded Candid, and he was lying prostrate in the street, covered with a heap of rubbish. He said to Pangloss:

"Oh! get me a little wine and oil; I am dying."

"This earthquake is no new thing," answered Pangloss; "the city of Lima in America experienced similar shocks last year; the same causes, the same effects; there is doubtless a vein of sulphur underground all the way from Lima to Lisbon."

"Nothing is more probable," returned Candid; "but, for God's sake, a little oil and wine!"

"Probable, say you!" replied the philosopher; "I maintain that there is positive proof of it."

Hereupon Candid lost consciousness, and Pangloss brought him a little water from a fountain that was near.

On the morrow, in crawling over the ruins, they discovered some provisions, and therewith recruited their strength a little, and then, like others, began to busy themselves in relieving the injured inhabitants who had escaped death. Some citizens, to whom they had brought succor, gave them as good a dinner as they could supply under such disastrous circumstances; it is true that the meal was a sad one, and that the company watered their bread with their tears, but Pangloss did his best to console them by the assurance that things could not have happened otherwise:

"For," said he, "nothing could have been better, for if there is a volcano under Lisbon, it could not be elsewhere, for it is impossible that things should not be where they are, for all is well."

VIII. "CHARLES THE TWELFTH." *The Life of Charles XII, King of Sweden,* is an interesting sketch of a very interesting man. John Burns says:

To *Charles the Twelfth of Sweden* I owe much of what has stood me in best stead all my life. It was nearly thirty years ago, when but a boy, that I bought his Life for a penny in the New Cut. I took it home and devoured it. It made a great impression on me. Not his wars, but the Spartan heroism of his character. He inspired me with the idea of triumphing over physical weakness, weariness and pain. To inure his body to bear all manner of hardships indifferently, to bathe in ice, or face the torrid rays of the sun, to discipline his physical powers by gymnastics, to despise the niceties of food and drink, to make his body an instrument as of tempered steel, and at the same time to have that body absolutely at the disposition of the mind, that seemed to me conduct worthy of a hero. And so, boylike, I tried to imitate him, and succeeded at least so far as to be happily indifferent to the circumstances of my personal environment.

Thomas Carlyle says:

Charles XII may still pass for a model in that oft-attempted species of biography; the clearest details are given in the fewest words; we have sketches of strange men and strange countries, of wars, adventures, negotiations, in a style which for graphic brevity rivals Sallust. It is a line engraving on a reduced scale of that Swede and his mad life, without colors, yet not without the foreshortenings and perspectives of a true picture. In respect of composition, whatever may be said of its accuracy

and worth otherwise, we cannot but reckon it as greatly the best of Voltaire's histories.

A number of interesting excerpts could be taken, but we must content ourselves with the description of the monarch's tragic death:

At the mouth of the river Tistendall, near the Bay of Denmark, stands Fredericshall, a place of strength and importance, which is considered the key to the kingdom. Charles began its siege in December. The cold was so extreme that the soldiers could hardly break the ground. It was like digging trenches in rock, but the Swedes were nothing daunted by fatigue which the King shared so readily. Charles had never suffered so severely. His constitution was so hardened by sixteen years' hardship that he would sleep in the open in a Norwegian mid-winter on boards or straw, wrapped only in his mantle, and yet keep his health.

Some of the soldiers fell dead at their posts, but others who were nearly dying dare not complain when they saw their King bearing it all. Just before this expedition he heard of a woman who had lived for several months on nothing but water, and he who had tried all his life to bear the hardest extremes that nature can bear resolved to try how long he could fast. He neither ate nor drank for five days, and on the sixth, in the morning, he rode two leagues to his brother's, where he ate heartily, yet neither his large meal nor his long fast incommoded him.

With such a body of iron, and a soul of so much strength and courage, there was not one of his neighbors who did not fear him.

On the 11th of December, St. Andrew's Day, he went to view his trenches at about nine in the evening, and finding the parallel not advanced as much as he wished, he was a little vexed at it. But M. Megret, the French engineer who was conducting the siege, told him the place would be taken in eight days' time. "We shall see," said the King, "what can be done." Then, going on with

the engineer to examine the works, he stopped at the place where the branch made an angle with the parallel; kneeling upon the inner slope, he leaned with his elbows on the parapet, to look at the men who were carrying on the entrenching by starlight.

The least details relating to the death of such a man as Charles are noted. It is therefore my duty to say that all the conversation reported by various writers, as having taken place between the King and the engineer, are absolutely false. This is what I know actually happened.

The King stood with half his body exposed to a battery of cannon directed precisely at the angle where he stood. No one was near him but two Frenchmen: one was M. Siquier, his *aide-de-camp,* a man of capacity and energy, who had entered his service in Turkey, and was particularly attached to the Prince of Hesse; the other was the engineer. The cannon fired grape-shot, and the King was more exposed than any of them. Not far behind was Count Sveren, who was commanding the trenches. At this moment Siquier and Megret saw the King fall on the parapet, with a deep sigh; they came near, but he was already dead. A ball weighing half-a-pound had struck him on the right temple, leaving a hole large enough to turn three fingers in; his head had fallen over the parapet, his left eye was driven in and his right out of its socket; death had been instantaneous, but he had had strength to put his hand to his sword, and lay in that posture.

At this sight Megret, an extraordinary and feelingless man, said, "Let us go to supper. The play is done." Siquier hastened to tell the Count Sveren, and they all agreed to keep it a secret till the Prince of Hesse could be informed. They wrapped the corpse in a gray cloak, Siquier put on his hat and wig; he was carried under the name of Captain Carlsbern through the troops, who saw their dead King pass, little thinking who it was.

The Prince at once gave orders that no one should stir out of the camp, and that all the passes to Sweden should be guarded, till he could arrange for his wife to

succeed to the crown, and exclude the Duke of Holstein, who might aim at it.

Thus fell Charles XII, King of Sweden, at the age of thirty-six and a half, having experienced the extremes of prosperity and of adversity, without being softened by the one or in the least disturbed by the other. All his actions, even those of his private life, are almost incredible. Perhaps he was the only man, and certainly he was the only king who never showed weakness; he carried all the heroic virtues to that excess at which they become faults as dangerous as the opposed virtues. His resolution, which became obstinacy, caused his misfortunes in Ukrania, and kept him five years in Turkey. His liberality degenerated into prodigality, and ruined Sweden. His courage, degenerating into rashness, was the cause of his death. His justice had been sometimes cruel, and in later years his maintenance of his prerogative came not far short of tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which would immortalize another prince, were a misfortune to his country. He never began a quarrel; but he was rather implacable than wise in his anger. He was the first whose ambition it was to be a conqueror, without wishing to increase his dominions. He desired to gain kingdoms with the object of giving them away. His passion for glory, war, and vengeance made him too little of a politician, without which none has ever been a conqueror. Before a battle he was full of confidence, very modest after a victory, and undaunted in defeat. Sparing others no more than himself, he made small account of his own and his subjects' labors; he was an extraordinary rather than a great man, and rather to be imitated than admired. But his life may be a lesson to kings and teach them that a peaceful and happy reign is more desirable than so much glory.

Charles XII was tall and well shaped. He had a fine forehead, large blue eyes, full of gentleness, and a well-shaped nose, but the lower part of his face was disagreeable and not improved by his laugh, which was unbecoming. He had little beard or hair, he spoke little,

and often answered only by the smile which was habitual to him.

Profound silence was preserved at his table. With all his inflexibility he was timid and bashful; he would have been embarrassed by conversation, because, as he had given up his whole life to practical warfare, he knew nothing of the ways of society. Before his long leisure in Turkey he had never read anything but Caesar's commentaries and the history of Alexander, but he had made some observations on war, and on his own campaigns from 1700–1709; he told this to the Chevalier Folard, and said that the MSS. had been lost at the unfortunate battle of Pultawa.

. . . . . .

As soon as he was dead the siege of Fredericshall was raised. The Swedes, to whom his glory had been a burden rather than a joy, made peace with their neighbors as fast as they could, and soon put an end to that absolute power of which Baron Gortz had wearied them. The States elected Charles's sister Queen, and forced her to solemnly renounce her hereditary right to the throne, so that she held it only by the people's choice. She promised by oath on oath that she would never secure arbitrary government, and afterwards, her love of power overcome by her love for her husband, she resigned the crown in his favor and persuaded the States to choose him, which they did under the same condition. Baron Gortz was seized after Charles's death, and condemned by the Senate of Stockholm to be beheaded under the gallows, an instance rather of revenge than of justice, and a cruel insult to the memory of a king whom Sweden still admires.

Charles's hat is preserved at Stockholm, and the smallness of the hole by which it is pierced is one of the reasons for supposing he was assassinated.

IX. "The Philosophical Dictionary." Voltaire's views on sociology and philosophy are embodied in the *Philosophical Letters,* the

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Philosophical Dictionary and in minor pamphlets, where the real man expressed himself frankly and through which his life work was accomplished. Written under fear of imprisonment and perhaps death, and published secretly and at intervals, these works speak with a freedom and forcefulness that is still admired long after the purpose for which they were produced has in a great measure been accomplished.

The following extract on the "Ignorant Philosopher" is condensed from the *Philosophical Dictionary:*

Who art thou? From whence dost thou come? What is thy employment? What will become of thee? These are questions that should be put to every being in the universe, but to which no one replies. I ask of plants by what virtue they grow, and how the same earth produces such a diversity of fruits? These insensible and mute beings, though enriched with a divine faculty, leave me to my own ignorance and to vain conjectures.

I interrogate that herd of different animals, all which have the power of motion and communication, who enjoy the same sensations as myself, whose passions are accompanied with an extent of ideas and memory. They are still more ignorant than myself what they are, wherefore they exist, and what they shall become.

I suspect, I have even some reason to believe that the planets, the innumerable suns which replenish space, are peopled with sensible and thinking people; but an eternal barrier separates us, and no inhabitant of the other globes ever communed with us.

. . . . . .

I am a weak animal; at my birth I have neither strength, knowledge, nor instinct; I cannot even crawl to my mother's breast, like every quadruped; I only ac-

quire a few ideas, as I acquire a little strength, and as my organs begin to unfold themselves. This strength increases in me, till such time as having attained my full growth it daily decreases. This power of conceiving ideas increases in the same manner during its term, and afterwards by degrees insensibly vanishes.

What is that mechanism which momentarily increases the strength of my members, as far as the prescribed boundaries? I am ignorant of it; and those who have passed their whole lives in the research, know no more than myself.

What is that other power, which conveys images into my brain, and which preserves them in my memory? Those who are paid for knowing have only made fruitless inquiries; we are all in the same state of ignorance, with regard to the first principles of our infant state.

Have the books which have been written for these two thousand years taught me anything? We have sometimes a desire of knowing in what manner we think, though we have seldom any desire of knowing how we digest, how we walk. I have questioned my reason, and asked what it is. This question has always confounded me.

I have endeavored to discover by it, if the same springs that make me digest, which make me walk, are the same whereby I receive ideas. I never could conceive how and wherefore these ideas fled when my body languished with hunger, and how they were renovated after I had eaten.

I discovered such a wide difference between thought and nourishment, without which I should not think, that I believed there was a substance in me that reasoned, and another substance that digested. Nevertheless, by constantly endeavoring to convince myself that we are two, I materially felt that I was only one: and this contradiction gave me infinite pain.

I have asked some of my own likenesses who cultivate the earth, our common mother, with great industry, if they felt that they were two? if they had discovered by their philosophy, that they possessed within them an im-

mortal substance, and nevertheless formed of nothing, existing without extent, acting upon their nerves, without touching them, sent expressly into them six weeks after their conception? They thought that I was jesting, and pursued the cultivation of their land without making me a reply.

Finding then that a prodigious number of men had not even the slightest idea of the difficulties that disturbed me, and had no doubts of what is taught in schools, of being, in general, matter and spirit, etc., finding that they often ridiculed my desire of being acquainted with these things; I suspected that it was not in the least necessary that we should know them; I imagined that nature has given to every being a portion that is proper for him; and I thought those things which we could not attain, did not belong to us. But notwithstanding this despair, I cannot divest myself of a desire of being instructed; and my baffled curiosity is ever insatiable.

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The point here is to examine what we can know by ourselves, and this is reduced to a very narrow compass. We must give up all pretensions to common sense not to agree, that we know nothing in the world but by experience; and certainly, if it is only by experience, and by a succession of groping and long reflection, that we obtain some feeble and slight ideas of body, of space, time, infinity, and God himself; it would not be worth while for the author of nature to put these ideas into the brain of every foetus, in order that only a very small number of men should make use of them.

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As we can have no notion, but by experience, it is not impossible that we can ever know what matter is. We touch, we see the properties of this substance; but this very expression "substance which is beneath," sufficiently acquaints us that this thing beneath will ever be unknown to us; whatever we may discover of its appearance, there will always remain this *beneath* to discover. For the same reason, we can never know by ourselves what is

spirit. It is a word which usually signifies breath, and by which we endeavor to express vaguely and grossly that which gives us thoughts. But when, even by a prodigy, which is not to be supposed, we should acquire some slight idea of the substance of this spirit, we should be no farther advanced; and we could never guess how this substance received sentiments and thoughts. We know very well that we have some small intellectual faculty; but how do we obtain it? This is a secret of nature, which she has not divulged to any mortal.

. . . . . .

Suppose that we found, in effect, the cause of our sensations, of our thoughts, and our motions, as we have only discovered in the planets the reason of eclipses and of the different phases of the moon and Venus; it is evident we could then foretell our sensations, our thoughts, and our desires resulting from these sensations, as we predict the phases and the eclipses. Being then acquainted with what would happen to-morrow within us, we should clearly see by the play of this machine, whether we should be affected in a fatal or auspicious manner. We have, it is agreed, a will that directs our interior motions in various circumstances. For example, I find myself disposed to wrath, my reflection and will suppress its growing exhibition; I shall see if I know my first principles, all the affections to which I am disposed for to-morrow, all the successive ideas that wait for me; I could have the same power over this succession of ideas and sentiments, as I sometimes exert over actual sentiments and thoughts, which I divert and repress. I should find myself precisely in the same case with every man who can retard and accelerate, according to his will, the motion of a watch, a ship, or any other well-known machine.

Being master of the ideas that are destined for me to-morrow, I should be also of those for the following day, and even the remainder of my life; I could then be ever powerful over myself, I should be the God of myself. I am very sensible that this state is incompatible with

my nature; it is therefore impossible that I can know anything of the first principle which makes me think and act.

Is that which is impossible for my weak limited nature of so short a duration, equally impossible in other globes, in other species of beings? Are there any superior intelligences, masters of all their ideas, who think and feel all that they choose? I know nothing of the matter; I am only acquainted with my own weakness, I have no idea of the powers of others.

From the same source comes this, on *The Library*:

There is this good in a large library, that it frightens the beholder! Two hundred thousand volumes are enough to discourage a man tempted to print a book. But unfortunately he very soon says to himself, "Most of those books are not read, and perhaps mine will be!" He compares himself to the drop of water that complained of being confounded and lost in the ocean; a génie took pity on it, and made an oyster swallow it. It became one of the finest pearls in the ocean, and in time the chief ornament of the great Mogul's throne.

* * *

It is true that in that immense collection of books there are about one hundred and ninety-nine thousand that will never be read, at least never read through; but one may need to consult some of them once in his life. And it is a great advantage to the seeker to find without delay, under his hand, in the palace of kings, the volume and the page he is looking for. The library is one of the noblest of institutions. There has never been an expense more magnificent and more useful.

Let not that astonishing multitude of books daunt the student. Paris contains seven hundred thousand people; one cannot live with them all, and must make choice of three or four friends,—and we ought not to complain more of a superfluity of books than of men.

X. Thoughts from Voltaire. The following sentences from different sources illustrate the trenchant nature of the great skeptic's style:

Most men die without having lived.

Who ought to be the king's favorite? The people.

We are in this world only to do good in it.

The more you know, the less sure you are.

Work is often the father of pleasure.

Take revenge upon a rival by surpassing him.

Opinion rules the world, and wise men rule opinion.

The mortal who goes astray is still a man and thy brother.

God judges us according to our virtues, not our sacrifices.

Men are born equal and die equal.

A sure means of not yielding to the desire to kill yourself is to have always something to do.

I envy the beasts two things,—their ignorance of evil to come, and their ignorance of what is said about them.

Believe that before His throne, in all times and in all places, the heart of the just person is precious.

I know no great men except those who have rendered great services to the human race.

Controversy never convinced any man; men can be influenced by making them think for themselves, by seeming to doubt with them, by leading them as if by the hand, without their perceiving it.

The
WRITINGS
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